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SPECIAL ISSUE

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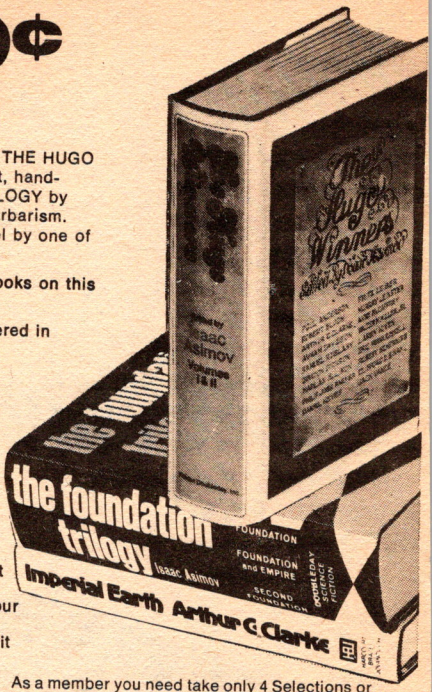

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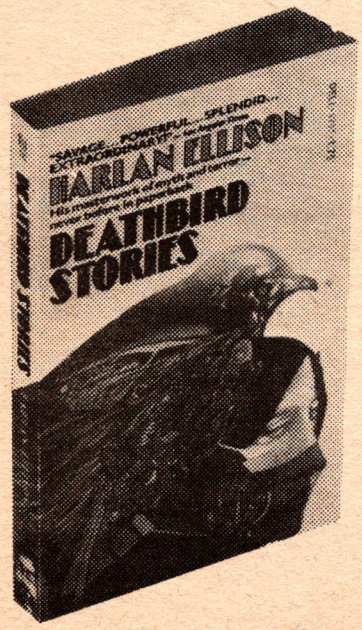

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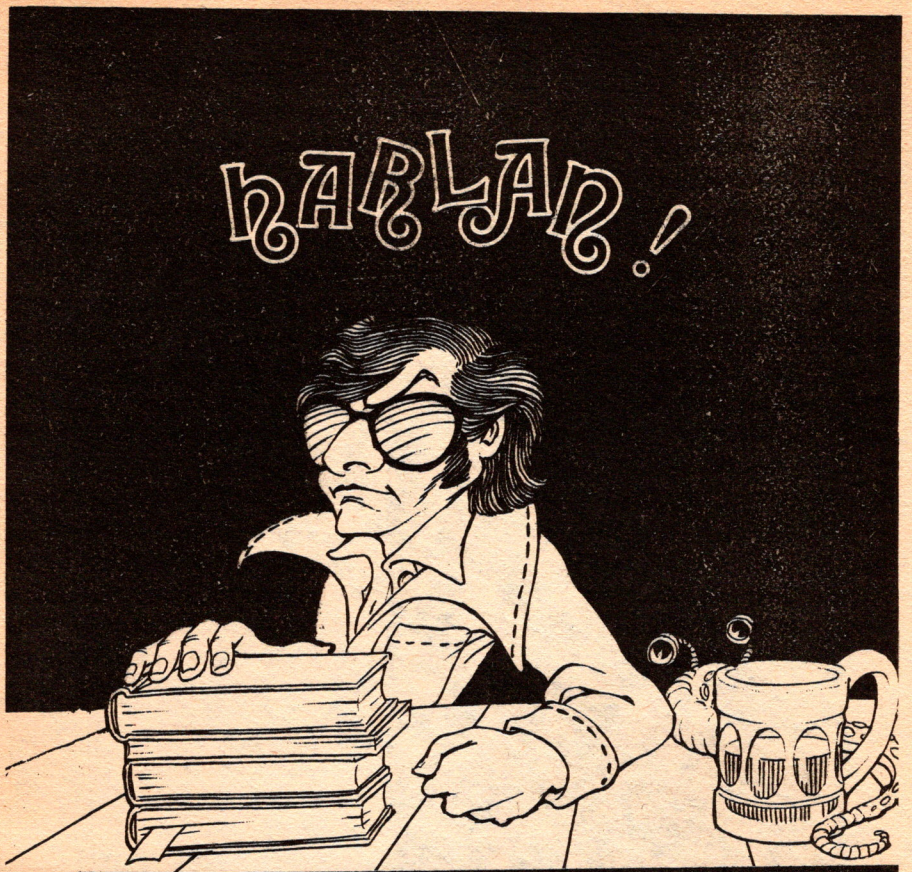

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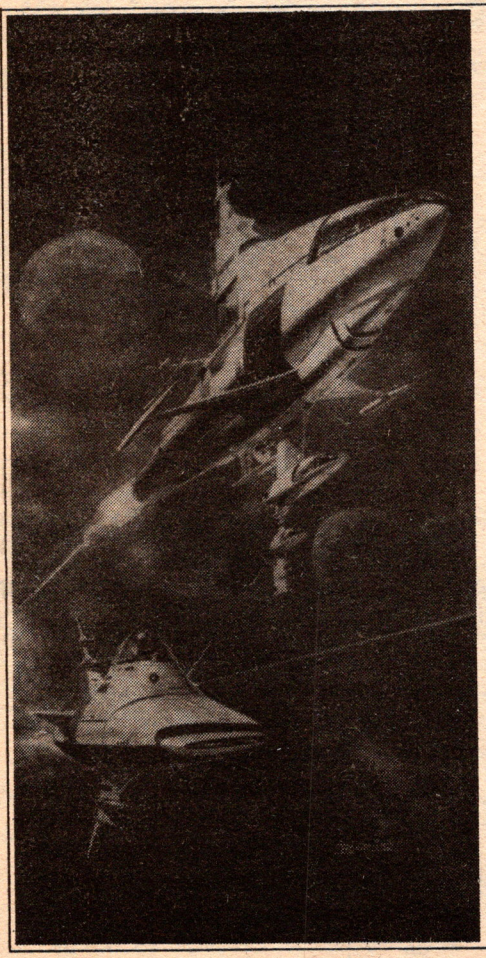

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This is the tenth in our series of special issues devoted to sf's finest writers, and, as might be expected from its subject, it goes just a bit further than any of the others. It has more stories (only Bradbury had even two) and more pages (edging Silverberg by two) — altogether an unmatched variety of material by and about Harlan Ellison, a result of and tribute to this unique writer's energy and talent.

The first item in our special issue file is a letter going back to the summer of 1974 (like any launch vehicle, Ellison is slow off the pad but fearsome when he gathers momentum). The final item in the file is an impressive envelope from something called Federal Express Courier-Pak. It screams RUSH/URGENT from every corner, and it arrived at the Hartford airport in mid-March. Inside was the last, and most eagerly awaited piece of copy for this issue, the touching story that you are about to read.

Jeffty Is Five

by HARLAN ELLISON

When I was five years old, there was a little kid I played with: Jeffty. His real name was Jeff Kinzer, and everyone who played with him called him Jeffty. We were five years old together, and we had good times playing together.

When I was five, a Clark Bar was as fat around as the gripping end of a Louisville Slugger, and pretty nearly six inches long, and they used real chocolate to coat it, and it crunched very nicely when you bit into the center, and the paper it came wrapped in smelled fresh and good when you peeled off one end to hold the bar so it wouldn't melt onto your fingers. Today, a Clark Bar is as thin as a credit card, they use something artificial and awful-tasting instead of pure chocolate, the thing is soft and soggy, it costs fifteen or twenty cents instead of a decent, correct nickel, and they wrap it so you think it's the same size it was twenty years ago, only it isn't; it's slim and ugly and nasty tasting and not worth a penny, much less fifteen or twenty cents.

When I was that age, five years old, I was sent away to my Aunt Patricia's home in Buffalo, New York for two years. My father was going through "bad times," and Aunt Patricia was very beautiful and had married a stockbroker. They took care of me for two years. When I was seven, I came back home and went to find Jeffty, so we could play together.

I was seven. Jeffty was still five. I didn't notice any difference. I didn't know: I was only seven.

When I was seven years old I used to lie on my stomach in front

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of our Atwater Kent radio and listen to swell stuff. I had tied the ground wire to the radiator, and I would lie there with my coloring books and my Crayolas (when there were only sixteen colors in the big box), and listen to the NBC red network: Jack Benny on the Jell-O Program, Amos 'n' Andy, Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy on the Chase and Sanborn Program, One Man's Family, First Nighter; the NBC blue network: Easy Aces, the Jergens Program with Walter Winchell, Information Please, Death Valley Days; and best of all, the Mutual Network with The Green Hornet, The Lone Ranger, The Shadow and Quiet Please. Today, I turn on my car radio and go from one end of the dial to the other and all I get is 100 strings orchestras, banal housewives and insipid truckers discussing their kinky sex lives with arrogant talk show hosts, country and western drivel and rock music so loud it hurts my ears.

When I was ten, my grandfather died of old age and I was "a troublesome kid," and they sent me off to military school, so I could be "taken in hand."

I came back when I was fourteen. Jeffty was still five.

When I was fourteen years old, I used to go to the movies on Saturday afternoons and a matinee was ten cents and they used real butter on the popcorn and I could always be sure of seeing a western like Lash LaRue, or Wild Bill Elliott as Red Ryder with Bobby Blake as Little Beaver, or Roy Rogers, or Johnny Mack Brown; a scary picture like *House of Horrors* with Rondo Hatton as the Strangler, or *The Cat People*, or *The Mummy*, or *I Married a Witch* with Fredric March and Veronica Lake; plus an episode of a great serial like The Shadow with Victor Jory, or Dick Tracy or Flash Gordon; and three cartoons; a James Fitzpatrick Travel Talk; Movietone News; a singalong and, if I stayed on till evening, Bingo or Keno; and free dishes. Today, I go to movies and see Clint Eastwood blowing people's heads apart like ripe cantaloupes.

At eighteen, I went to college. Jeffty was still five. I came back during the summers, to work at my Uncle Joe's jewelry store. Jeffty hadn't changed. Now I knew there was something different about him, something wrong, something weird. Jeffty was still five years old, not a day older.

At twenty-two I came home for keeps. To open a Sony television franchise in town, the first one. I saw Jeffty from time to time. He was five.

Things are better in a lot of ways. People don't die from some of the old diseases any more. Cars go faster and get you there more

quickly on better roads. Shirts are softer and silkier. We have paperback books even though they cost as much as a good hardcover used to. When I'm running short in the bank I can live off credit cards till things even out. But I still think we've lost a lot of good stuff. Did you know you can't buy linoleum any more, only vinyl floor covering? There's no such thing as oilcloth any more; you'll never again smell that special, sweet smell from your grandmother's kitchen. Furniture isn't made to last thirty years or longer because they took a survey and found that young homemakers like to throw their furniture out and bring in all new color-coded borax every seven years. Records don't feel right; they're not thick and solid like the old ones, they're thin and you can bend them... that doesn't seem right to me. Restaurants don't serve cream in pitchers any more, just that artificial glop in little plastic tubs, and one is never enough to get coffee the right color. Everywhere you go, all the towns look the same with Burger Kings and MacDonald's and 7-Elevens and motels and shopping centers. Things may be better, but why do I keep thinking about the past?

What I mean by five years old is not that Jeffty was retarded. I don't think that's what it was. Smart as a whip for five years old; very bright, quick, cute, a funny kid.

But he was three feet tall, small for his age, and perfectly formed, no big head, no strange jaw, none of that. A nice, normal-looking five year old kid. Except that he was the same age as I was: twenty-two.

When he spoke, it was with the squeaking, soprano voice of a five year old; when he walked it was with the little hops and shuffles of a five year old; when he talked to you, it was about the concerns of a five year old... comic books, playing soldier, using a clothes pin to attach a stiff piece of cardboard to the front fork of his bike so the sound it made when the spokes hit was like a motorboat, asking questions like *why does that thing do that like that,* how high is up, how old is old, why is grass green, what's an elephant look like? At twenty-two, he was five.

Jeffty's parents were a sad pair. Because I was still a friend of Jeffty's, still let him hang around with me in the store, sometimes took him to the county fair or to the miniature golf or the movies, I wound up spending time with *them.* Not that I much cared for them, because they were so awfully depressing. But then, I suppose one couldn't expect much more from the poor devils. They had an alien thing in their home, a child who had grown no older than five in twenty-two years, who provided the treasure of that special childlike

state indefinitely, but who also denied them the joys of watching the child grow into a normal adult.

Five is a wonderful time of life for a little kid... or it *can* be, if the child is relatively free of the monstrous beastliness other children indulge in. It is a time when the eyes are wide open and the patterns are not yet set; a time when one has not yet been hammered into accepting everything as immutable and hopeless; a time when the hands can not do enough, the mind cannot learn enough, the world is infinite and colorful and filled with mysteries. Five is a special time before they take the questing, unquenchable, quixotic soul of the young dreamer and thrust it into dreary schoolroom boxes. A time before they take the trembling hands that want to hold everything, touch everything, figure everything out, and make them lie still on desktops. A time before people begin saying "act your age" and "grow up" or "you're behaving like a baby." It is a time when a child who acts adolescent is still cute and responsive and everyone's pet. A time of delight, of wonder, of innocence.

Jeffty had been stuck in that time, just five, just so.

But for his parents it was an ongoing nightmare from which no one — not social workers, not priests, not child psychologists, not teachers, not friends, not medical wizards, not psychiatrists, no one — could slap or shake them awake. For seventeen years their sorrow had grown through stages of parental dotage to concern, from concern to worry, from worry to fear, from fear to confusion, from confusion to anger, from anger to dislike, from dislike to naked hatred, and finally, from deepest loathing and revulsion to a stolid, depressive acceptance.

John Kinzer was a shift foreman at the Balder Tool & Die plant. He was a thirty year man. To everyone but the man living it, his was a spectacularly uneventful life. In no way was he remarkable... save that he had fathered a twenty-two-year-old five year old.

John Kinzer was a small man, soft, with no sharp angles, with pale eyes that never seemed to hold mine for longer than a few seconds. He continually shifted in his chair during conversations, and seemed to see things in the upper corners of the room, things no one else could see... or wanted to see. I suppose the word that best suited him was *haunted.* What his life had become ...well, *haunted* suited him.

Leona Kinzer tried valiantly to compensate. No matter what hour of the day I visited, she always tried to foist food on me. And when Jeffty was in the house she was always at *him* about eating: "Hon-

ey, would you like an orange? A nice orange? Or a tangerine? I have tangerines. I could peel a tangerine for you." But there was clearly such fear in her, fear of her own child, that the offers of sustenance always had a faintly ominous tone.

Leona Kinzer had been a tall woman, but the years had bent her. She seemed always to be seeking some area of wallpapered wall or storage niche into which she could fade, adopt some chintz or rose-patterned protective coloration and hide forever in plain sight of the child's big brown eyes, pass her a hundred times a day and never realize she was there, holding her breath, invisible. She always had an apron tied around her waist. And her hands were red from cleaning. As if by maintaining the environment immaculately she could pay off her imagined sin: having given birth to this strange creature.

Neither of them watched television very much. The house was usually dead silent, not even the sibilant whispering of water in the pipes, the creaking of timbers settling, the humming of the refrigerator. Awfully silent, as if time itself had taken a detour around that house.

As for Jeffty, he was inoffensive. He lived in that atmosphere of gentle dread and dulled loathing, and if he understood it, he never remarked in any way. He played, as a child plays, and seemed happy. But he must have sensed, in the way of a five year old, just how alien he was in their presence.

Alien. No, that wasn't right. He was *too* human, if anything. But out of phase, out of synch with the world around him, and resonating to a different vibration than his parents, God knows. Nor would other children play with him. As they grew past him, they found him at first childish, then uninteresting, then simply frightening as their perceptions of aging became clear and they could see he was not affected by time as they were. Even the little ones, his own age, who might wander into the neighborhood, quickly came to shie away from him like a dog in the street when a car backfires.

Thus, I remained his only friend. A friend of many years. Five years. Twenty-two years. I liked him; more than I can say. And never knew exactly why. But I did, without reserve.

But because we spent time together, I found I was also — polite society — spending time with John and Leona Kinzer. Dinner, Saturday afternoons sometimes, an hour or so when I'd bring Jeffty back from a movie. They were grateful: slavishly so. It relieved them of the embarrassing chore of going out with him, of having to pretend before the world that they were loving

parents with a perfectly normal, happy, attractive child. And their gratitude extended to hosting me. Hideous, every moment of their depression, hideous.

I felt sorry for the poor devils, but I despised them for their inability to love Jeffty, who was eminently lovable.

I never let on, even during the evenings in their company that were awkward beyond belief.

We would sit there in the darkening living room — *always* dark or darkening, as if kept in shadow to hold back what the light might reveal to the world outside through the bright eyes of the house — we would sit and silently stare at one another. They never knew what to say to me.

"So how are things down at the plant," I'd say to John Kinzer.

He would shrug. Neither conversation nor life suited him with any ease or grace. "Fine, just fine," he would say, finally.

And we would sit in silence again.

"Would you like a nice piece of coffee cake?" Leona would say. "I made it fresh just this morning." Or deep dish green apple pie. Or milk and toll house cookies. Or a brown betty pudding.

"No, no, thank you, Mrs. Kinzer; Jeffty and I grabbed a couple of cheeseburgers on the way home." And again, silence.

Then, when the stillness and the awkwardness became too much even for them (and who knew how long that total silence reigned when they were alone, with that thing they never talked about any more, hanging between them), Leona Kinzer would say, "I think he's asleep."

John Kinzer would say, "I don't hear the radio playing."

Just so, it would go on like that, until I could politely find excuse to bolt away on some flimsy pretext. Yes, that was the way it would go on, every time, just the same... except once.

"I don't know what to do any more," Leona said. She began crying. "There's no change, not one day of peace."

Her husband managed to drag himself out of the old easy chair and went to her. He bent and tried to soothe her, but it was clear from the graceless way in which he touched her graying hair that the ability to be compassionate had been stunned in him. "Shhh, Leona, it's all right. Shhh." But she continued crying. Her hands scraped gently at the antimacassars on the arms of the chair.

Then she said, "Sometimes I wish he had been stillborn."

John looked up into the corners of the room. For the nameless

shadows that were always watching him? Was it God he was seeking in those spaces? "You don't mean that," he said to her, softly, pathetically, urging her with body tension and trembling in his voice to recant before God took notice of the terrible thought. But she meant it; she meant it very much.

I managed to get away quickly that evening. They didn't want witnesses to their shame. I was glad to go.

And for a week I stayed away. From them, from Jeffty, from their street, even from that end of town.

I had my own life. The store, accounts, suppliers' conferences, poker with friends, pretty women I took to well-lit restaurants, my own parents, putting anti-freeze in the car, complaining to the laundry about too much starch in the collars and cuffs, working out at the gym, taxes, catching Jan or David (whichever one it was) stealing from the cash register. I had my own life.

But not even *that* evening could keep me from Jeffty. He called me at the store and asked me to take him to the rodeo. We chummed it up as best a twenty-two year old with other interests *could*... with a five year old. I never dwelled on what bound us together; I always thought it was simply the years. That, and affection for a kid who could have been the little brother I never had. (Except I *remembered* when we had played together, when we had both been the same age; I *remembered* that period, and Jeffty was still the same.)

And then, one Saturday afternoon, I came to take him to a double feature, and things I should have noticed so many times before, I first began to notice only that afternoon.

I came walking up to the Kinzer house, expecting Jeffty to be sitting on the front porch steps, or in the porch glider, waiting for me. But he was nowhere in sight.

Going inside, into that darkness and silence, in the midst of May sunshine, was unthinkable. I stood on the front walk for a few moments, then cupped my hands around my mouth and yelled, "Jeffty? Hey, Jeffty, come on out, let's go. We'll be late."

His voice came faintly, as if from under the ground.

"Here I am, Donny."

I could hear him, but I couldn't see him. It was Jeffty, no question about it: as Donald H. Horton, President and Sole Owner of The Horton TV & Sound Center, no one but Jeffty called me Donny. He had never called me anything else.

(Actually, it isn't a lie. I *am,* as far as the public is concerned, Sole

Owner of the Center. The partnership with my Aunt Patricia is only to repay the loan she made me, to supplement the money I came into when I was twenty-one, left to me when I was ten by my grandfather. It wasn't a very big loan, only eighteen thousand, but I asked her to be a silent partner, because of when she had taken care of me as a child.)

"Where are you, Jeffty?"

"Under the porch in my secret place."

I walked around the side of the porch, and stooped down and pulled away the wicker grating. Back in there, on the pressed dirt, Jeffty had built himself a secret place. He had comics in orange crates, he had a little table and some pillows, it was lit by big fat candles, and we used to hide there when we were both... five.

"What'cha up to?" I asked, crawling in and pulling the grate closed behind me. It was cool under the porch, and the dirt smelled comfortable, the candles smelled clubby and familiar. Any kid would feel at home in such a secret place: there's never been a kid who didn't spend the happiest, most productive, most deliciously mysterious times of his life in such a secret place.

"Playin'," he said. He was holding something golden and round. It filled the palm of his little hand.

"You forget we were going to the movies?"

"Nope. I was just waitin' for you here."

"Your mom and dad home?"

"Momma."

I understood why he was waiting under the porch. I didn't push it any further. "What've you got there?"

"Captain Midnight Secret Decoder Badge," he said, showing it to me on his flattened palm.

I realized I was looking at it without comprehending what it was for a long time. Then it dawned on me what a miracle Jeffty had in his hand. A miracle that simply could *not* exist.

"Jeffty," I said softly, with wonder in my voice, "where'd you get that?"

"Came in the mail today. I sent away for it."

"It must have cost a lot of money."

"Not so much. Ten cents an' two inner wax seals from two jars of Ovaltine."

"May I see it?" My voice was trembling, and so was the hand I extended. He gave it to me and I held the miracle in the palm of my hand. It was *wonderful.*

You remember. *Captain Midnight* went on the radio nationwide in 1940. It was sponsored by Ovaltine. And every year they issued a Secret Squadron Decoder Badge.

And every day at the end of the program, they would give you a clue to the next day's installment in a code that only kids with the official badge could decipher. They stopped making those wonderful Decoder Badges in 1949. I remember the one I had in 1945; it was beautiful. It had a magnifying glass in the center of the code dial. *Captain Midnight* went off the air in 1950, and though it was a short-lived television series in the mid-Fifties, and though they issued Decoder Badges in 1955 and 1956, as far as the *real* badges were concerned, they never made one after 1949.

The Captain Midnight Code-O-Graph I held in my hand, the one Jeffty said he had gotten in the mail for ten cents (*ten cents!!!*) and two Ovaltine labels, was brand new, shiny gold metal, not a dent or a spot of rust on it like the old ones you can find at exorbitant prices in collectible shoppes from time to time... it was a *new* Decoder. And the date on it was *this* year.

But *Captain Midnight* no longer existed. Nothing like it existed on the radio. I'd listened to the one or two weak imitations of old-time radio the networks were currently airing, and the stories were dull, the sound effects bland, the whole feel of it wrong, out of date, cornball. Yet I held a *new* Code-O-Graph.

"Jeffty, tell me about this," I said.

"Tell you what, Donny? It's my new Capt'n Midnight Secret Decoder Badge. I use it to figger out what's gonna happen tomorrow."

"Tomorrow how?"

"On the program."

"*What* program?!"

He stared at me as if I was being purposely stupid. "On Capt'n *Mid*night! Boy!" I was being dumb.

I still couldn't get it straight. It was right there, right out in the open, and I still didn't know what was happening. "You mean one of those records they made of the old-time radio programs? Is that what you mean, Jeffty?"

"What records?" he asked. He didn't know what *I* meant.

We stared at each other, there under the porch. And then I said, very slowly, almost afraid of the answer, "Jeffty, how do you hear *Captain Midnight?*"

"Every day. On the radio. On my radio. Every day at five-thirty."

News. Music, dumb music, and news. That's what was on the radio every day at five-thirty. Not *Captain Midnight.* The Secret Squadron hadn't been on the air in twenty years.

"Can we hear it tonight?" I asked.

"Boy!" he said. I was being dumb. I knew it from the way he said it; but I didn't know *why.* Then it dawned on me: this was Saturday. *Captain Midnight* was on

Monday through Friday. Not on Saturday or Sunday.

"We goin' to the movies?"

He had to repeat himself twice. My mind was somewhere else. Nothing definite. No conclusions. No wild assumptions leapt to. Just off somewhere trying to figure it out, and concluding — as *you* would have concluded, as *any*one would have concluded rather than accepting the truth, the impossible and wonderful truth — just finally concluding there was a simple explanation I didn't yet perceive. Something mundane and dull, like the passage of time that steals all good, old things from us, packratting trinkets and plastic in exchange. And all in the name of Progress.

"We goin' to the movies, Donny?"

"You bet your boots we are, kiddo," I said. And I smiled. And I handed him the Code-O-Graph. And he put it in his side pants pocket. And we crawled out from under the porch. And we went to the movies. And neither of us said anything about *Captain Midnight* all the rest of that day. And there wasn't a ten-minute stretch, all the rest of that day, that I didn't think about it.

It was inventory all that next week. I didn't see Jeffty till late Thursday. I confess I left the store in the hands of Jan and David, told them I had some errands to run, and left early. At 4:00. I got to the Kinzer's right around 4:45. Leona answered the door, looking exhausted and distant. "Is Jeffty around?" She said he was upstairs in his room...

...listening to the radio.

I climbed the stairs two at a time.

All right, I had finally made that impossible, illogical leap. Had the stretch of belief involved anyone but Jeffty, adult or child, I would have reasoned out more explicable answers. But it *was* Jeffty, clearly another kind of vessel of life, and what he might experience should not be expected to fit into the ordered scheme.

I admit it: I *wanted* to hear what I heard.

Even with the door closed, I recognized the program:

"There he goes, Tennessee! Get him!"

There was the heavy report of a rifle shot and the keening whine of the slug ricocheting, and then the same voice yelled triumphantly, *"Got him! D-e-a-a-a-a-d center!"*

He was listening to the American Broadcasting Company, 790 kilocycles, and he was hearing *Tennessee Jed,* one of my most favorite programs from the Forties, a western adventure I had not heard in twenty years, because it had not

existed for twenty years.

I sat down on the top step of the stairs, there in the upstairs hall of the Kinzer home, and I listened to the show. It wasn't a rerun of an old program, because there were occasional references in the body of the drama to current cultural and technological developments, and phrases that had not existed in common usage in the Forties: aerosol spray cans, laseracing of tattoos, Tanzania, the word "uptight."

I could not ignore the fact. Jeffty was listening to a *new* segment of *Tennessee Jed.*

I ran downstairs and out the front door to my car. Leona must have been in the kitchen. I turned the key and punched on the radio and spun the dial to 790 kilocycles. The ABC station. Rock music.

I sat there for a few moments, then ran the dial slowly from one end to the other. Music, news, talk shows. No *Tennessee Jed.* And it was a Blaupunkt, the best radio I could get. I wasn't missing some perimeter station. It simply was not there!

After a few moments I turned off the radio and the ignition and went back upstairs quietly. I sat down on the top step and listened to the entire program. It was *wonderful.*

Exciting, imaginative, filled with everything I remembered as being most innovative about radio drama. But it was modern. It wasn't an antique, re-broadcast to assuage the need of that dwindling listenership who longed for the old days. It was a new show, with all the old voices, but still young and bright. Even the commercials were for currently available products, but they weren't as loud or as insulting as the screamer ads one heard on radio these days.

And when *Tennessee Jed* went off at 5:00, I heard Jeffty spin the dial on his radio till I heard the familiar voice of the announcer Glenn Riggs proclaim, *"Presenting Hop Harrigan! America's ace of the airwaves!"* There was the sound of an airplane in flight. It was a prop plane, *not* a jet! Not the sound kids today have grown up with, but the sound *I* grew up with, the *real* sound of an airplane, the growling, revving, throaty sound of the kind of airplanes G-8 and His Battle Aces flew, the kind Captain Midnight flew, the kind Hop Harrigan flew. And then I heard Hop say, *"CX-4 calling control tower. CX-4 calling control tower. Standing by!"* A pause, then, *"Okay, this is Hop Harrigan... coming in!"*

And Jeffty, who had the same problem all of us kids had in the Forties with programming that pitted equal favorites against one another on different stations, having paid his respects to Hop Harrigan and Tank Tinker, spun the dial

and went back to ABC where I heard the stroke of a gong, the wild cacophany of nonsense Chinese chatter, and the announcer yelled, *"T-e-e-e-rry and the Pirates!"*

I sat there on the top step and listened to Terry and Connie and Flip Corkin and, so help me God, Agnes Moorehead as The Dragon Lady, all of them in a new adventure that took place in a Red China that had not existed in the days of Milton Caniff's 1937 version of the Orient, with river pirates and Chiang Kai-shek and warlords and the naive Imperialism of American gunboat diplomacy.

Sat, and listened to the whole show, and sat even longer to hear *Superman* and part of *Jack Armstrong, the All-American boy,* and part of *Captain Midnight,* and John Kinzer came home and neither he nor Leona came upstairs to find out what had happened to me, or where Jeffty was, and sat longer, and found I had started crying, and could not stop, just sat there with tears running down my face, into the corners of my mouth, sitting and crying until Jeffty heard me and opened his door and saw me and came out and looked at me in childish confusion as I heard the station break for the Mutual Network and they began the theme music of *Tom Mix,* "When it's Round-up Time in Texas and the Bloom is on the Sage," and Jeffty touched my shoulder and smiled at me and said, "Hi, Donny. Wanna come in an' listen to the radio with me?"

Hume denied the existence of an absolute space, in which each thing has its place; Borges denies the existence of one single time, in which all events are linked.

Jeffty received radio programs from a place that could not, in logic, in the natural scheme of the space-time universe as conceived by Einstein, exist. But that wasn't all he received. He got mail order premiums that no one was manufacturing. He read comic books that had been defunct for three decades. He saw movies with actors who had been dead for twenty years. He was the receiving terminal for endless joys and pleasures of the past that the world had dropped along the way. On its headlong suicidal flight toward New Tomorrows, the world had razed its treasurehouse of simple happiness, had poured concrete over its playgrounds, had abandoned its elfin stragglers, and all of it was being impossibly, miraculously shunted back into the present through Jeffty. Revivified, updated, the traditions maintained but contemporaneous. Jeffty was the unbidding Aladdin whose very nature formed the magic lampness of his reality.

And he took me into his world.

Because he trusted me.

We had breakfast of Quaker Puffed Wheat Sparkies and warm Ovaltine we drank out of *this* year's little Orphan Annie Shake-Up Mugs. We went to the movies and while everyone else was seeing a comedy starring Goldie Hawn and Ryan O'Neal, Jeffty and I were enjoying Humphrey Bogart as the professional thief Parker in John Huston's brilliant adaptation of the Donald Westlake novel, *Slayground.* The second feature was Spencer Tracy, Carole Lombard and Laird Cregar in the Val Lewton-produced film of *Leinengen Versus the Ants.*

Twice a month we went down to the newsstand and bought the current pulp issues of *The Shadow, Doc Savage* and *Startling Stories.* Jeffty and I sat together and I read to him from the magazines. He particularly liked the new short novel by Henry Kuttner, "The Dreams of Achilles," and the new Stanley G. Weinbaum series of short stories set in the subatomic particle universe of Redurna. In September we enjoyed the first installment of the new Robert E. Howard Conan novel, ISLE OF THE BLACK ONES, in *Weird Tales;* and in August were only mildly disappointed by Edgar Rice Burroughs' fourth novella in the Jupiter series featuring John Carter of Barsoom — "Corsairs of Jupiter." But the editor of *Argosy All-Story Weekly* promised there would be two more stories in the series, and it was such an unexpected revelation for Jeffty and me, that it dimmed our disappointment at the lessened quality of the current story.

We read comics together, and Jeffty and I both decided — separately, before we came together to discuss it — that our favorite characters were Doll Man, Airboy and The Heap. We also adored the George Carlson strips in *Jingle Jangle Comics,* particularly the Pie-Face Prince of Old Pretzleburg stories, which we read together and laughed over, even though I had to explain some of the subtler puns to Jeffty, who was too young to have that kind of subtle wit.

How to explain it? I can't. I had enough physics in college to make some offhand guesses, but I'm more likely wrong than right. The laws of the conservation of energy occasionally break. These are laws that physicists call "weakly violated." Perhaps Jeffty was a catalyst for the weak violation of conservation laws we're only now beginning to realize exist. I tried doing some reading in the area — muon decay of the "forbidden" kind: gamma decay that doesn't include the muon neutrino among its products — but nothing I encountered, not even the latest readings from the Swiss Institute for Nuclear Re-

search near Zurich gave me an insight. I was thrown back on a vague acceptance of the philosophy that the real name for "science" is *magic.*

No explanations, but enormous good times.

The happiest time of my life.

I had the "real" world, the world of my store and my friends and my family, the world of profit & loss, of taxes and evenings with young women who talked about going shopping or the United Nations, of the rising cost of coffee and microwave ovens. And I had Jeffty's world, in which I existed only when I was with him. The things of the past he knew as fresh and new, I could experience only when in his company. And the membrane between the two worlds grew ever thinner, more luminous and transparent. I had the best of both worlds. And knew, somehow, that I could carry nothing from one to the other.

Forgetting that, for just a moment, betraying Jeffty by forgetting, brought an end to it all.

Enjoying myself so much, I grew careless and failed to consider how fragile the relationship between Jeffty's world and my world really was. There is a reason why the present begrudges the existence of the past. I never really understood. Nowhere in the beast books, where survival is shown in battles between claw and fang, tentacle and poison sac, is there recognition of the ferocity the present always brings to bear on the past. Nowhere is there a detailed statement of how the present lies in wait for What-Was, waiting for it to become Now-This-Moment so it can shred it with its merciless jaws.

Who could know such a thing... at any age... and certainly not at my age... who could understand such a thing?

I'm trying to exculpate myself. I can't. It was my fault.

It was another Saturday afternoon.

"What's playing today?" I asked him, in the car, on the way downtown.

He looked up at me from the other side of the front seat and smiled one of his best smiles. "Ken Maynard in *Bullwhip Justice* an' *The Demolished Man.*" He kept smiling, as if he'd really put one over on me. I looked at him with disbelief.

"You're *kid*ding!" I said, delighted. Bester's THE DEMOLISHED MAN?" He nodded his head, delighted at my being delighted. He knew it was one of my favorite books. "Oh, that's super!"

"Super *duper,*" he said.

"Who's in it?"

"Franchot Tone, Evelyn Keyes, Lionel Barrymore and Elisha Cook,

Jr." He was much more knowledgeable about movie actors than I'd ever been. He could name the character actors in any movie he'd ever seen. Even the crowd scenes.

"And cartoons?" I asked.

"Three of 'em, a *Little Lulu*, a *Donald Duck* and a *Bugs Bunny*. An' a *Pete Smith Specialty* an' a *Lew Lehr Monkeys is da C-r-r-r-aziest Peoples.*"

"Oh boy!" I said. I was grinning from ear to ear. And then I looked down and saw the pad of purchase order forms on the seat. I'd forgotten to drop it off at the store.

"Gotta stop by the Center," I said. "Gotta drop off something. It'll only take a minute."

"Okay," Jeffty said. "But we won't be late, will we?"

"Not on your tintype, kiddo," I said.

When I pulled into the parking lot behind the Center, he decided to come in with me and we'd walk over to the theater. It's not a large town. There are only two movie houses, the Utopia and the Lyric. We were going to the Utopia, only three blocks from the Center.

I walked into the store with the pad of forms, and it was bedlam. David and Jan were handling two customers each, and there were people standing around waiting to be helped. Jan turned a look on me and her face was a horror-mask of pleading. David was running from the stockroom to the showroom and all he could murmur as he whipped past was, "Help!" and then he was gone.

"Jeffty," I said, crouching down, "listen, give me a few minutes. Jan and David are in trouble with all these people. We won't be late, I promise. Just let me get rid of a couple of these customers." He looked nervous, but nodded okay.

I motioned to a chair and said, "Just sit down for a while and I'll be right with you."

He went to the chair, good as you please, though he knew what was happening, and he sat down.

I started taking care of people who wanted color television sets. This was the first really substantial batch of units we'd gotten in — color television was only now becoming reasonably priced and this was Sony's first promotion — and it was bonanza time for me. I could see paying off the loan and being out in front for the first time with the Center. It was business.

In my world, good business comes first.

Jeffty sat there and stared at the wall. Let me tell you about the wall.

Stanchion and bracket designs had been rigged from floor to within two feet of the ceiling. Television sets had been stacked artfully on the wall. Thirty-three television sets. All playing at the same

time. Black and white, color, little ones, big ones, all going at the same time.

Jeffty sat and watched thirty-three television sets, on a Saturday afternoon. We can pick up a total of thirteen channels including the UHF educational stations. Golf was on one channel; baseball was on a second; celebrity bowling was on a third; the fourth channel was a religious seminar; a teen-age dance show was on the fifth; the sixth was a rerun of a situation comedy; the seventh was a rerun of a police show; eighth was a nature program showing a man flycasting endlessly; ninth was news and conversation; tenth was a stock car race; eleventh was a man doing logarithms on a blackboard; twelfth was a woman in a leotard doing sitting-up exercises; and on the thirteenth channel was a badly-animated cartoon show in Spanish. All but six of the shows were repeated on three sets. Jeffty sat and watched that wall of television on a Saturday afternoon while I sold as fast and as hard as I could, to pay back my Aunt Patricia and stay in touch with my world. It was business.

I should have known better. I should have understood about the present and the way it kills the past. But I was selling with both hands. And when I finally glanced over at Jeffty, half an hour later, he looked like another child.

He was sweating. That terrible fever sweat when you have stomach flu. He was pale, as pasty and pale as a worm, and his little hands were gripping the arms of the chair so tightly I could see his knuckles in bold relief. I dashed over to him, excusing myself from the middle-aged couple looking at the new 21" Mediterranean model.

"Jeffty!"

He looked at me, but his eyes didn't track. He was in absolute terror. I pulled him out of the chair and started toward the front door with him, but the customers I'd deserted yelled at me, "Hey!" The middle-aged man said, "You wanna sell me this thing or don't you?"

I looked from him to Jeffty and back again. Jeffty was like a zombie. He had come where I'd pulled him. His legs were rubbery and his feet dragged. The past, being eaten by the present, the sound of something in pain.

I clawed some money out of my pants pocket and jammed it into Jeffty's hand. "Kiddo... listen to me... get out of here right now!" He still couldn't focus properly. *"Jeffty,"* I said as tightly as I could, *"listen* to me!" The middle-aged customer and his wife were walking toward us. "Listen, kiddo, get out of here right this minute. Walk over to the Utopia and buy the tickets. I'll be right behind you." The middle-aged man and his wife were

almost on us. I shoved Jeffty through the door and watched him stumble away in the wrong direction, then stop as if gathering his wits, turn and go back past the front of the Center and in the direction of the Utopia. "Yes sir," I said, straightening up and facing them, "yes, ma'am, that is one terrific set with some sen*sa*tional features! If you'll just step back here with me..."

There was a terrible sound of something hurting, but I couldn't tell from which channel, or from which set, it was coming.

Most of it I learned later, from the girl in the ticket booth, and from some people I knew who came to me to tell me what had happened. By the time I got to the Utopia, nearly twenty minutes later, Jeffty was already beaten to a pulp and had been taken to the Manager's office.

"Did you see a very little boy, about five years old, with big brown eyes and straight brown hair... he was waiting for me?"

"Oh, I think that's the little boy those kids beat up?"

"What!?! *Where is he?*"

"They took him to the Manager's office. No one knew who he was or where to find his parents —"

A young girl wearing an usher's uniform was placing a wet paper towel on his face.

I took the towel away from her and ordered her out of the office. She looked insulted and snorted something rude, but she left. I sat on the edge of the couch and tried to swab away the blood from the lacerations without opening the wounds where the blood had caked. Both his eyes were swollen shut. His mouth was ripped badly. His hair was matted with dried blood.

He had been standing in line behind two kids in their teens. They started selling tickets at 12:30 and the show started at 1:00. The doors weren't opened till 12:45. He had been waiting, and the kids in front of him had had a portable radio. They were listening to the ballgame. Jeffty had wanted to hear some program, God knows what it might have been, *Grand Central Station, Land of the Lost,* God only knows which one it might have been.

He had asked if he could borrow their radio to hear the program for a minute, and it had been a commercial break or something, and the kids had given him the radio, probably out of some malicious kind of courtesy that would permit them to take offense and rag the little boy. He had changed the station... and they'd been unable to get it to go back to the ballgame. It was locked into the past, on a station that was broadcasting a program that didn't exist for anyone but Jeffty.

They had beaten him badly... as everyone watched.

And then they had run away.

I had left him alone, left him to fight off the present without sufficient weaponry. I had betrayed him for the sale of a 21" Mediterranean console television, and now his face was pulped meat. He moaned something inaudible and sobbed softly.

"Shhh, it's okay, kiddo, it's Donny. I'm here. I'll get you home, it'll be okay."

I should have taken him straight to the hospital. I don't know why I didn't. I should have. I should have done that.

When I carried him through the door, John and Leona Kinzer just stared at me. They didn't move to take him from my arms. One of his hands was hanging down. He was conscious, but just barely. They stared, there in the semi-darkness of a Saturday afternoon in the present. I looked at them. "A couple of kids beat him up at the theater." I raised him a few inches in my arms and extended him. They stared at me, at both of us, with nothing in their eyes, without movement. "Jesus Christ," I shouted, "he's been beaten! He's your son! Don't you even want to touch him? What the hell kind of people are you?!"

Then Leona moved toward me very slowly. She stood in front of us for a few seconds, and there was a leaden stoicism in her face that was terrible to see. It said, *I have been in this place before, many times, and I cannot bear to be in it again; but I am here now.*

So I gave him to her. God help me, I gave him over to her.

And she took him upstairs to bathe away his blood and his pain.

John Kinzer and I stood in our separate places in the dim living room of their home, and we stared at each other. He had nothing to say to me.

I shoved past him and fell into a chair. I was shaking.

I heard the bath water running upstairs.

After what seemed a very long time Leona came downstairs, wiping her hands on her apron. She sat down on the sofa and after a moment John sat down beside her. I heard the sound of rock music from upstairs.

"Would you like a piece of nice pound cake?" Leona said.

I didn't answer. I was listening to the sound of the music. Rock music. On the radio. There was a table lamp on the end table beside the sofa. It cast a dim and futile light in the shadowed living room. Rock music from the present, on a radio upstairs? I started to say something, and then *knew*...

I jumped up just as the sound of hideous crackling blotted out the

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music, and the table lamp dimmed and dimmed and flickered. I screamed something, I don't know what it was, and ran for the stairs.

Jeffty's parents did not move. They sat there with their hands folded, in that place they had been for so many years.

I fell twice rushing up the stairs.

There isn't much on television that can hold my interest. I bought an old cathedral-shaped Philco radio in a second-hand store, and I replaced all the burnt-out parts with the original tubes from old radios I could cannibalize that still worked. I don't use transistors or printed circuits. They wouldn't work. I've sat in front of that set for hours sometimes, running the dial back and forth as slowly as you can imagine, so slowly it doesn't look as if it's moving at all sometimes.

But I can't find *Captain Midnight* or *The Land of the Lost* or *The Shadow* or *Quiet Please.*

So she did love him, still, a little bit, even after all those years. I can't hate them: they only wanted to live in the present world again. That isn't such a terrible thing.

It's a good world, all things considered. It's much better than it used to be, in a lot of ways. People don't die from the old diseases any more. They die from new ones, but that's Progress, isn't it?

Isn't it?

Tell me.

Somebody please tell me.

Here is a densely written and provocative story about a man named Moth who has survived a life full of painful memories and is now embarked on a difficult and very strange voyage. It is certainly the most intensely personal and downbeat of the three stories Harlan wrote for this issue, and in that sense is perhaps the most "typical" Ellison story of the three. However, Harlan has shown such a wide range in tone and subject matter in recent years that there may no longer be a "typical" Ellison story.

Alive and Well and On A Friendless Voyage

by HARLAN ELLISON

Then, and only then, like some mysterious Prisoner in the Iron Mask hidden from everyone's sight, only then, when the gigantic vessel slipped out of normal continuity and entered the megaflow, only then did the man they called Moth emerge from his stateroom.

As the immense tambour shields rolled down into the body of the vessel, exposing the boiling white jelly that was the megaflow surging past beyond the great crystal ports, the door to his stateroom rolled up and he emerged, dressed entirely in white. Clown-white circles around his dark, haunted eyes. Everyone looked and stopped talking.

The lounge of the gigantic vessel was packed, with voyagers grouped by twos and threes and fours at the bubble tables with their thin stalk supports. Voyagers who had boarded at 4:00, at Now, at Here, at three dimensions — bound for 41:00, for the 85th of February, for Yet To Be, for There, for the last stop before the end of measurable space and time and thought. They looked at Moth and they stopped talking.

Their faces said: *who is this person?*

And he walked down among them haltingly; he did not know them. This ship of strangers, and Moth.

He sat down at a table with one empty chair. A man and a woman already sat there. The woman was slim, neither attractive nor unattractive, a mild looking woman,

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difficult to discompose. The man looked kind, there were crinkle lines at the corners of his eyes. Moth sat down across from them, as the gigantic vessel hurtled through the megaflow, and the kind-looking man said, "It wasn't your fault."

Moth looked sad. "I can't believe that. I think it must have been my fault."

"No, no," the unperturbed woman said quickly, "it *wasn't!* There was nothing that could be done. Your son would have died nonetheless. You can't castigate yourself for believing in God. You *mustn't.*"

Moth leaned forward and put his face in his hands. His voice came faintly. "It was insane. Dead is dead. I should have known that... I *did* know it."

The kind-looking man reached across and touched Moth's hand. "The sickness was put on him by God, because of something you had done, you or your wife. It couldn't have been the child. He was too young to have known sin. But you knew *you* or your wife were filled with sin. And so your child fell ill. But if you could be as brave as the Bible said you must be, you could save him."

The calm woman gently pried Moth's hands away from his face and forced him to look into her eyes. She held his hands across the table and said, "Doctors could not save him... you *knew* that. God sets no store by science, only faith. Keeping them from the child was necessary. Hiding him in the basement was *important.*"

Moth whispered, "But he grew worse. He sickened. It was too cold down there, perhaps. I might have let the family do what they wanted, let a physician *see* him, at least."

"No," the kind man said imperatively. "No! Faith cannot be broken. You maintained. You were right. Even when he died."

"It was holy the way you sat vigil over him," the woman said. "Day after day. You said he would rise on the second or third day. And you had belief in God."

Moth began to cry silently. "He lay there. Three days, and he lay there. His color changed."

"Then a week," the kind man said. "Faith! You had faith! In a week he would rise."

"No," Moth said, "not in a week. Dead."

"Twenty-one days, a magic number. It would have been on the twenty-first day. But they came and the law made you give him up, and they arrested you, and all through the hearings you insisted on God's Will, and your good wife, she stood by you through the hatred and the anguish as outsiders reviled you."

"He never rose. They buried him in the earth," Moth said, drying his eyes. The clown-white

had run down his cheeks.

"So you were forced to leave. To go outside. To get away to a place where God would hear you. It was the right way; you had no other choice. Either believe, or become one with the faithless people who filled your world. You need not have guilt," the kind man said. He touched Moth's sleeve.

"You'll find peace," the calm woman said.

"Thank you," Moth said, rising and leaving them.

The man and woman sank back in their chairs, and the lights that had been lit in their eyes as they spoke to Moth... dimmed and grew sullen. Moth moved through the lounge.

A young man with an intense expression and nervous hand movements sat alone. He stared out the port at the megaflow.

"May I sit down here?" Moth asked.

The young man looked at him, taking his eyes off the swirling, bubbling jelly of the megaflow reluctantly. But he did not reply. There was loathing in his expression. He turned back to the crystal port without answering Moth.

"Please. May I sit with you? I want to talk to you."

"I don't talk to cowards," the young man said. His jaw muscles spasmed with anger.

"I'm a coward, yes, I'll admit it," Moth said helplessly. "But, please, let me sit."

"Oh, for Christ's sake, *sit* already! But just shut your mouth; don't speak to me!" He turned once again to the port.

Moth sat down, folded his hands on the table, did not speak, stared steadily at the young man's profile.

After a few moments the young man turned his face. He looked at Moth. "You make me sick. I'd like to punch you in the face, you disgusting coward."

"Yes," said Moth miserably, "I wouldn't stop you. I'm a coward, as you say."

"Worse! Worse than just a coward. A hypocrite, a silly posturing fool! You spent your whole life playing the big man, the big stud, the cavalier. The tough, cynical mover and shaker. But you weren't any smarter or tougher than any other simple-minded jerk who thought with his groin."

"I made mistakes," Moth said. "Just like everybody else. There's never enough experience. I thought I knew what I was doing. I fell in love with her."

"Oh, that's terrific," the young man said. The tone was frankly vicious. "Terrific. *You fell in love.* You moron! She was nineteen. You were over twice her age. Why did you let her whipsaw you into marriage? Come on, you idiot, why?"

"She said she loved me, thought I was better than other men, said if I didn't marry her she would go away and I'd never see her again. I was in love, I'd only been in love once before. No, that isn't right: I'd only *loved* once before. The thought of never seeing that face again filled me with fear. That was it: I was afraid I'd never see her again. I couldn't live with that."

"So you married her."

"Yes."

"But you couldn't sleep with her, couldn't make love to her. What did you expect from her. She was a child."

"She *talked* like a woman. She said all the right things an adult woman says. I didn't realize she was still confused, didn't know what she wanted."

"But you couldn't make love to her, isn't that so?"

"Yes, it's so. She was like a child, a daughter; my thoughts weren't straight; I didn't realize that was what was happening. All interest in sex just vanished; for her, for any woman. I thought—"

"What *she* thought. That you were impotent. That you were falling apart. She got more frightened every day. A lifetime to spend with a man who would never show her any passion."

"But there was love. I loved her. Without reserve. I showed it in a million ways, every hour of the day that we spent together."

"Gifts."

"Yes, gifts. Touches. Hugs and kisses and smiles."

"Purchases. You tried buying her."

"No, never that."

"Rented, then. It was the same."

The young man clenched and unclenched his hands. They seemed to have movement directed from somewhere outside him. The hands moved and seemed to want to strike Moth. The man in clown-white could not have failed to notice, but he did not flinch, did not move away. He sat waiting for the next assault, willing victim.

"How did it feel when you found out she was sleeping with him?"

"It hurt terribly. Worse than anything I'd ever felt. There was a ball of pain in the bottom of my lungs, like something inside breathing, a second heart, I don't know: and every time it breathed, the pain was worse."

The young man sneered. "And what did you do about it, big man?"

"I wanted to kill him."

"Why him? He was only picking up on the available goodies. You leave something lying around unused, there'll always be someone who'll put it to use."

Moth said forlornly, "It was the

way she was doing it."

The young man laughed nastily. "You ass. There's *always* some stupid rationalization cuckolds like you fasten on to make it seem dramatic. If it hadn't been this way, it would have been another; and you'd have found some aspect on *that* in bad taste. Can't you understand it's all excuses?"

"But when I found out, and asked her to leave, she said she would go to stay with her family, to think it out. But she moved in with him."

The young man moved suddenly. He leaned across and grabbed Moth's shirt. He pulled him half across the table and his voice became a low snarl of hatred. "*Then* what did you do, hero? Huh, what happened then?"

Moth spoke softly, as if ashamed. "I loaded a gun and went down there to his apartment and kicked in the door. I put my shoe flat against the jamb right beside the lock and pulled back and slammed it as hard as I could. It popped the lock right out of the frame. I went straight through the living room of that awful little apartment and into the bedroom, and they were on the bed naked. It was just the way I'd been seeing it in my head, with him on top of her, except they'd heard the lock shatter and he was trying to get untangled from the sheets and I caught him with one foot on the floor."

The young man shook Moth. Not too hard, but hard enough to show how angry he was, how disgusted he was. Beyond them, the megaflow took on a scar-tissue appearance, inflamed, nastily pink with burned blue tinges. He continued shaking Moth gently, as if jangling coins from a small bank.

"I rushed him and shoved the gun into his mouth. I heard him start to moan something and then his teeth broke when the muzzle of the gun went into his mouth. I pushed him flat on his back, down onto the bed, and I kneeled with my right leg on his chest, and I told her to get dressed, that I was taking her out of there."

The young man shoved him back. Moth sat silently.

"What a stupid, miserable, pitiful little mind, you are. None of that is true, is it?"

Moth looked away. Softly, he said, "No. None of it."

"What *did* you do when you found out she was with him, after four months of marriage?"

"Nothing."

"You loaded the gun and did nothing."

"Yes."

"You couldn't even bring yourself to make the act real, could you?"

"No. I'm a coward. I wanted to kill him, and then kill myself."

"But not her."

"No. Never her. I loved her. I couldn't kill her, so I wanted to kill everything else in the world."

"Get away from me, you pathetic little shit. Just get up and walk away from me and don't talk to me any more. You ran away. You're running now. But you're not going to escape."

Moth said, "In time, I'll forget."

"You'll never completely forget it. Time will dull it, and maybe it'll be supportable. But you'll never forget."

"Perhaps not," Moth said, and stood up. He turned away, and as he turned away, the light that had blazed madly in the young man's eyes dimmed and went out. He turned back to the scar-tissue of the megaflow and stared at nothingness.

Moth walked through the lounge, breathing deeply.

He passed a beautiful woman with pale yellow hair and almost white eyebrows, who was sitting in company with two nondescript men at a table for four. As Moth came abreast of her, she reached out and touched his arm. "I feel more sorrow for you than animosity," she said, in a gentle and deep voice. Her words were filled with rich tones.

Moth sat down in the empty chair. The two men seemed not to see him, though they listened to the conversation between Moth and the beautiful woman.

"No one should ever be judged heartless because they tended to their own personal survival," she said. She held an unlit cigarette in a short holder. One of the men in attendance moved to light it, but she waved him away sharply. Her attention was solidly with Moth.

"I could have saved one of them," Moth responded. He pressed the back of his hand to his mouth, as though seeing again a terrible vision from the past. "The fire, the Home ballooning with flames from the windows, the sound of their screams. They were so old, so helpless."

The pale yellow hair shimmered as the beautiful woman shook her head. "You were only the caretaker of their lives; it wasn't written on stone that you had to *die* for them. You were conscientious, you were a good administrator; there was never the slightest impropriety in the Home. But what could you do? You were *afraid!* Everyone has a secret fear. For some it's growing old, for others it's snakes or spiders or being buried alive. Drowning, being laughed at in public, closed-in spaces, being rejected. *Every*one has something."

"I didn't know it was fire. I swear to God I didn't realize. But when I came down the hall that

night and smelled the smoke, I was paralyzed. I stood there in the hall, just staring at the wire-screen door to the dormitory section. We *always* kept it locked at night. It wasn't a jail ... it was for their own protection: they were so old, and some of them roamed at night. We couldn't keep watch all the time, it just wasn't feasible."

"I know, I know," the beautiful woman said, soothing him. "It was for their own protection. They had their television in the dorm, and bathroom facilities. It was lovely up there, just the same as the private rooms on the lower floors. But they *roamed,* they walked at night; they might fall down stairs or have an attack and there would be no one to help them, no call button for you or an orderly nearby. I understand why you kept the screen locked."

Moth spread his hands helplessly. He looked this way and that, as if seeking a white light that would release him from the pain of memory. "I smelled the smoke, and as I stood there, not knowing what to do, almost ready to push forward and unlock the door and go inside, a blast of heat and flame came right through the screen! The heat was so intense I fell back. But even then... *even then* I would have done something, but the cat..."

The beautiful woman nodded. "It was the sight of the cat that terrified you, that made you suddenly realize it was fire that hid down there in your mind, waiting to possess you. I understand, anyone would understand!"

"I don't know how it got through the screen. It... it *strained itself* through, and it was on fire, burning, one of the old women's cats. It was on fire. The smell of the fur, the crackling, it was burning like fat in a fire. It screamed, oh God the sound of the screaming, the tail all black and the parts of it bubbling..."

"Don't!" the beautiful woman said, feeling Moth's pain. "Don't torment yourself. You ran. I understand why you ran. There was nothing you could do."

"No one knew I had had the choice. I stood outside and watched, and once I saw a face at one of the windows. It was wrapped in flames, an old man, his long hair burning. It was ghastly, terrible, I couldn't bear it. I cried and screamed up at them, and the ones who had escaped, some of the orderlies, tried to get back up there, and one of *them* was killed, when the ceiling fell in. But no one knew, I had had a chance to save them, I *might* have saved them, perhaps only one of them, but I *could* have done something."

"No," the woman reassured him, "You would have been burned alive, too. And there had been the cat. No one ever need know."

"But *I* know!"

"You survived. That's what counts."

"The pain. The knowledge, the pain."

"It will pass."

"No. Never."

One of the two men moved again to light her cigarette. She put the cigarette and the holder on the table. Moth shook himself as if awakening from a nightmare, and stood up. He turned away from the woman and her silent companions. The light in her eyes faded.

Moth walked through the lounge.

The gigantic vessel plowed on through the roiling megaflow jelly, bound for the end of appreciable space, asymptotically struggling toward the verge of time, pulling itself forward inexorably to the precipice of measurable thought. The voyage included only three stops: embarkation, principal debarkation and over the edge. The voyagers sat dull and silent, occasionally sipping off a drink that had been ordered through the punch-button system on each chair. The only sounds in the lounge were the susurations as the panels in the tables opened to allow drinks to rise to the surface, the random sounds of fingernails or teeth on glass, and the ever-present hiss of the megaflow as it rampaged past the vessel. Voices could be heard in the boiling jelly, carried through the hull of the vessel, like voices of the dead, whispering for their final hearing, their day in the court of judgment. But no coherent thoughts came with those voices, no actual words, no messages from the beyond that could be of any use to the voyagers within.

Entombed outside time and space and thought, the voyagers sat silently within their trip ship, facing in any direction they chose. Direction did not matter. The vessel only traveled in one direction. And they, within, entombed.

Moth wandered through the lounge, sitting here for a few moments to tell a fat man of how he had taken a girl who worked for him as a secretary away from her husband and children, had set her up in an expensive apartment, and then, weary of her, had left her with the unbreakable lease and no funds, even without a job because it simply isn't good business to be having an affair with someone who works for you. Particularly not with a woman who is so suicide-prone. And he told the fat man how he had set up a trust fund for the children after it was over, after the girl who had worked for him as a secretary had become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Wandered through the lounge sitting there for a long time confessing to an old woman with many rings how he had mercilessly

used his age and illness to bind his sons and daughters to him till long past the time when they could find joyful lives for themselves, with no intention of *ever* signing over his wealth to them. Wandered through the lounge sitting over there for a time to reveal to a tall, thin chocolate-colored man how he had betrayed the other members of a group to which he had belonged, naming names and, from the dark interior of the back seat of a large automobile, pointing out the ones who had led the movement, and watching as they had been battered to their knees in the rain and the mud, and wincing as the thugs with the lead pipes had smashed in the back of each head, very professionally, very smoothly, only one solid downstroke for each man. Wandered through the lounge and talked to a pretty young girl about the devious mind-games he had played with lovers, unnerving them and unsettling them and forcing them to spend all their time trying to dance and sing their dances and songs of life for his amusement, until their dances had degenerated into feeble tremblings and their songs had died away to rattles. Wandered through the lounge being penitent, remorseful, contrite. Sat and recanted, rued, confessed, humbled himself and wept occasionally.

And each person, as he walked away leaving them to their secret thoughts, flickered for a moment with life in the eyes, and then the lights died and they were once again alone.

He came to a table where a thin, plain-looking young woman sat alone, biting her thumbnail.

"I'd like to sit down and discuss something with you," he said. She shrugged as if she didn't care, and he sat.

"I've come to realize we're all alone," he said.

She did not reply. Merely stared at him.

"No matter how many people love us or care for us or want to ease our burden in this life," Moth said, "we are all, all of us, always alone. Something Aldous Huxley once said, I'm not sure I know it exactly, I've looked and looked and can't find the quote, but I remember part of it. He said: 'We are, each of us, an island universe in a sea of space.' I think that was it."

She looked at him without expression. Her face was thin and without remarkable feature. No engaging smile, no intricate intriguing bone structure, no sudden dimple or angle that revealed her as even momentarily attractive. The look she gave him was the one she had perfected. Neutral.

"My life has always been sad music," Moth said, with enormous sincerity. "Like a long symphony

played all in minors. Wind in trees and conversations heard through walls at night. No one looked at me, no one wanted to know. But I maintained; that's all there is. There's one day, and the end of it, and night, and sleep that comes slowly, and then another day. Until there are as many behind as there are ahead. No questions, no answers, alone. But I maintain. I don't let it bend me. And the song continues."

The unprepossessing young woman smiled faintly.

She reached across and touched his hand.

Moth's eyes sparkled for a moment.

Then the gigantic vessel began to slow.

They sat that way, her hand on his, until the tambour shields rolled up and they were encysted totally. And soon the gigantic vessel ceased its movement. They had arrived at the edge, at the point of debarkation.

Everyone rose to leave.

Moth stood and walked away from them. He walked back through the lounge and no one spoke to him, no one touched him. He came to the door to his stateroom and he turned.

"Excuse me," he said. They watched, silently.

"Is there anyone here who will change places with me, please? Anyone who will take my place for the rest of the voyage?" He looked out at them from his white makeup, and he waited a decent time.

No one answered, though the unremarkable young woman seemed to want to say something. But she didn't.

Moth smiled. "I thought not," he said softly.

Then he turned and the door to his stateroom rolled up and he went inside. The door rolled down and everyone left the gigantic vessel quietly.

After a moment the debarkation port irised shut, and the gigantic vessel began to move again. On into final darkness, from which there was no return.

My thanks for this singular compliment to: Isaąc Asimov, Arthur Byron Cover, Richard Delap, Sheryl Dichter, Beverly Effinger, George Alec Effinger, Audrey Ferman, Kelly Freas, Jim Harmon, Walter Koenig, Barry Malzberg, Terrence Martin, Susan Robbins, Robert Silverberg, Leslie Kay Swigart and most especially, of course, Ed Ferman.

—HE

This story was the first stage of the Special Ellison Rocket. It was received in the summer of 1976, went to Kelly Freas and generated the wonderful cover. Ellison wrote: "This one was written in the front window of Words & Music in London; it is a happy, funny story, and I offer it to you in hopes it will make you laugh." On the other hand, it is about a writer who can no longer write, and that is not so happy. John Updike has put it this way: "Among artists, a writer's equipment is least out-of-reach — the language we all more or less use, a little patience at grammar and spelling, the common adventures of blundering mortals. A painter must learn to paint; his studio is redolent of alchemic substances and physical force. The musician's arcanum of specialized knowledge and personal dexterity is even more intimidating, less accessible to the untrained, and therefore somehow less corruptible than the writer's craft. Though some painters and musicians go bad in the prime of their lives, far fewer do, and few so drastically, as writers. Our trick is treacherously thin . . ."

Working With The Little People

by HARLAN ELLISON

Nineteen years earlier, Noah Raymond had written his last fantasy. Since that time over four hundred brilliant stories had been published under his byline. All four hundred had come from his typewriter. What no one knew was that Noah Raymond had not written them. They had been written by gremlins.

Success had come early to Raymond. He had sold his first story, "An Agile Little Mind," to the leading fantasy pulp magazine of the period, when he was seventeen. It was slug-lined as a *First Story*, and the craft and imagination it displayed made him an instant *cause celebre*. He sold a dozen more stories in the next two years and came to the notice of the fiction editor of a major slick magazine.

The slick paid twenty times what the pulps could afford; the response was from a much wider readership; and as the fiction editor was sleeping with the anthologist who annually cobbled up the most prestigious collection of The Year's Best Short Stories, Noah Raymond found himself, four months short of his nineteenth birthday, with a novelette on that year's table of contents between a pastiche by

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Katherine Anne Porter and a slice-of-life by Isaac Bashevis Singer.

His first collection was published when he was twenty. Knopf. The promotion manager became enthralled with the book and sent it around to Saroyan and Capote and by special messenger to John Collier. The prepublication quotes in the *Times' Book Review Section* were awesome. The word "genius" appeared eight times in a half page.

By the time he was twenty-five, because he was fecund, he had seven books to his credit, and librarians did not file him under "science fiction/fantasy" but in the "modern literature" section. At age twenty-six his first novel, *Every Morning at First Light*, was selected as a Book-of-the-Month Club alternate and was nominated for the National Book Award.

His personal papers were solicited for preservation in the Archive Library at Harvard, and he went on a critically and financially impressive European lecture tour. He was twenty-seven.

In the month of August, on a Friday night — the 20th, to be exact — at twenty-three minutes to midnight, to be tedious about it — Noah Raymond ran dry. That simply, that easily, that directly, that horrifyingly ... he ran dry.

He wrote the last original word of the last original idea he had and abruptly found himself flensed of even the tiniest scintilla of an idea for a new story. He had an assignment from the BBC to write an original story that could be adapted for an hour-long dramatic special, and he hadn't the faintest inkling of what he could write about.

He thought for the better part of an hour, and the only idea that came to him was about a mad, one-legged seaman hunting a big white fish. He thrust the idea from him forcibly; it was redolent with idiocy.

For the first time in his life, since the first moment he realized he had the gift of storytelling, the magic gift of stringing words together so they plumbed the human heart, he was empty of new thoughts. No more strange little fables about the world as he wished it to be, the world that lived in his mind, a world peopled by characters full and firm and more real than those with whom he had to deal each day. His mind was a vast, empty plain without structure upon it or roll to its topography ... with nothing in sight but gray vistas that extended to limitless horizons.

All that night he sat before his typewriter, urging his mind to dream, to go away from him in wild journeys. But the dreams were empty husks and his mind came back from the journeys as devoid of thoughts as an earthworm.

Finally, when dawn came up

over the valley, he found himself crying. He leaned across the typewriter, put his head on the cool metal and wept. He knew, with the terrible certainty that brooks no exceptions, that he was dry. He had written his last story. He simply had no more ideas. That was the end of it.

Had the world ended just then, Noah Raymond would have cheered. Then he would have had no anguish, no terror, no concern about what he would do tomorrow. And the tomorrow after that. And all the seamless, hopeless tomorrows that stretched before him like a vast, empty plain.

Writing stories was Noah Raymond's whole life. He had nothing else of consequence that approached by a million miles the joy of telling a story. And now that the river had run dry, leaving only the silt of ideas he had worked endlessly and the tag-end memories of other people's work, great classics half-remembered, seminal treatments of hoary cliches, he did not know what he would do with the remainder of his life.

He contemplated going the Mark Twain route, cashing in on what he had already written with endless lecture tours. But he wasn't that good a speaker, and frankly he didn't like crowds of more than two people. He considered going the John Updike route, snagging himself a teaching sinecure at some tony Eastern college where the incipient junior editors of unsuspecting publishing houses were still in the larval stage as worshipful students. But he was sure he'd end up in a mutually destructive relationship with a sexually liberated English literature major and come to a messy finish. He dandled the prospect of simply going the Salinger route, of retiring to a hidden cottage somewhere in Vermont or perhaps in Dorset, of leaking mysterious clues to a major novel forthcoming some decade soon, but he had heard that Pynchon and Salinger were both mad as a thousand battlefields, and he shivered at the prospect of becoming a hermit. And all that was left was the realization that what he had written was the sum total, that one year soon some snide bastard at *The Atlantic Monthly* would write a piercing, penetrating piece titled, "The Spectacular Rise and Soggy Demise of Noah Raymond, ex-Enfant Terrible." He couldn't face that.

But there was no exit from this prison of sterilized nothingness.

He was twenty-seven, and he was finished.

He stopped crying into the typewriter. He didn't want to rust the works. Not that it mattered.

He crawled off to bed and slept the day. He woke at eight o'clock

and thought about eating, forgetting for the moment that he was finished. But when the knowledge surged back to drown his consciousness, he promptly went into the bathroom and divested himself of the previous evening's dinner, what had not been digested while he slept.

Packing the queen mother of all headaches, he trudged into the tiny office off the living room, fearing to look at the neglected typewriter he knew would stare back at him with its weirdly hideous snaggle-toothed qwertyuiop grin.

Before he stepped through the door, he realized he'd been hearing the sound of the typewriter since he'd slid out of bed. Had heard, and had dismissed the sound as a product of nightmare and memory.

But the typewriter *was* making its furious tack-tack-tack-space-tack sound. And it was not an electric typewriter. It was a manual, an old Olympia office machine. He did not trust electric typewriters. They continued humming maliciously when one paused to marshal one's thoughts. And if one placed one's hands on the keyboard preparatory to writing some measure of burning, immortal prose, and hesitated the slightest bit before tapping the keys, the insolent beast went off like a Thompson submachine gun. He did not like, or trust, electric typewriters, wouldn't have one in the same house, wouldn't write a word on one of the stupid things, wouldn't —

He stopped thinking crazy thoughts. He *couldn't* write, would never write again; and the typewriter was blamming away merrily just on the other side of the room.

He stared into the office, and in the darkness he could see the typewriter's silhouette on the typing shelf he had built with his own hands. Behind it, the window was pale with moonlight and he could see the shape clearly. What he felt he was *not* seeing were the tiny black shapes that were leaping up and down on the keys. But he stood there and continued staring, and thought he was further around the bend than even the horror of the night before had led him to believe he could be. Bits of black were bounding up and down on the keyboard, spinning up into the pale square of glassed moonlight, then dropping back into darkness, bounding up again, doing flips, then falling into darkness once more. *My typewriter has dandruff*, was his first, deranged thought.

And the sound of the old Olympia manual office machine was like that of a Thompson submachine gun.

The little black bounding bits were working away at the keys of the typewriter in excess of 150 words per minute.

"How do you spell *necromancy*," said a thin, tiny, high, squeaky, sharp, speedy, brittle, chirping voice, "with two *c*'s or a *c* and a penultimate *s*?"

There was a muffled "oof!" as of someone bashing his head against a hollow-core door, and then — a trifle on the breathless side — a second voice replied, "Two *c*'s, you illiterate!" The second voice was only slightly less thin, tiny, high, squeaky, sharp, speedy, brittle and chirping. It also had a faintly Cockney accent.

And the blamming on the keyboard continued.

My life has been invaded by archy the cockroach, was Noah Raymond's second, literary, even more deranged thought. In those days, the wonderful writings of the late Don Marquis were still popular; such a thought would have been relevant.

He turned on the light switch beside the door.

Eleven tiny men, each two inches high, were doing a trampoline act on his typewriter.

The former *enfant terrible* sagged against the doorjamb, and he heard the hinges of his jaw crack like artillery fire as his mouth fell open.

"Turn off that light, you great loon!" yelled one of the little men, describing a perfect immelmann and plunging headfirst onto the # key while a pair of the little men with another pair of little men on their shoulders weighted down the carriage shift key so the one who had dived would get an upper-case # and not a lower-case 3.

"Off, you bugger, turn it off!" shouted a trio of little men in unison as they ricocheted across each other's trajectories to type p-a-r-s-i-m-o-n-i-o-u-s. They were a blur, bounding and dodging and shooting past each other like gnats around a dog's ear.

When he made no move to click off the light — because he was unable to move to do *any*thing — the tallest of the little men (2¼") did a two-step on the space bar and landed on the typewriter carriage housing, arms akimbo and fists balled. He stared straight at Noah Raymond and in a thin, tiny, high, etcetera voice howled, "That's it! Everybody stops work!"

The other ten bounced off their targets and vacated the typewriter *en masse*. They stood around on the typing shelf, rubbing their heads, some of them removing their tiny caps to massage sore spots on foreheads and craniums.

"Precisely *how* do you expect us to get ten thousand words written tonight with you disturbing us?" the little man (who was clearly the spokesman) said with annoyance.

I can't face the future, Noah thought. *The delusions are starting*

already and it's not even twenty-four hours.

Another of the little men, somewhat shorter than the others, yelled, "'Ey, Alf. Cawnt'cher get this silly git outta f'ere? We'll never 'ave done, 'e don't move on!"

Noah did not understand one word the littler little man had said.

The tallest of the little men glared at the tiniest one and snarled, "Shut'cher yawp, Charlie." His accent was the same as Charlie's, dead-on Cockney. but when he looked back at Noah, he returned to the precise Mayfair tones he had first used. "Let's get this matter settled, Mr. Raymond. We've got a night's work ahead of us, you've got a story due, and neither of us will manage if we don't get this perishing explanation out of the way."

Noah just stared. He had hot flashes.

"Sit down, Mr. Raymond."

He sat down. On the floor. He didn't want to, he just suddenly did it, sat down ... on the floor.

"Now," said Alf, "your first question is: what are we? Well. We might ask the same of you. What are you?"

Charlie started hooting. "Cut out th' malarkey, Alf. Send 'im out an' tell 'im t'leave off annoyin' us!"

Alf glared at the little man. "Y'know, Charlie, you're a right king mixer, you are. You better close up your cake 'ole before I come down there an' pop you a good'un in the'ooter!"

Charlie made a nasty bratting sound like a Bronx cheer, the time-honored raspberry, and sat down on the shelf, dangling his tiny legs and whistling unconcernedly.

Alf turned back to Noah. "You're a human, Mr. Raymond. The inheritors of the Earth. We know all about you, all there is to know. We should, after all; we've been around a lot longer than you. We're gremlins."

Noah Raymond recognized them at once. Living and breathing and arguing personifications of the mythical "little people" who had become a household word during World War II, the sort of/kind of elf-folk deemed responsible for mechanical failures and chance mishaps to Allied aircraft, particularly those of the British. They had been as famous as Kilroy. The Royal Air Force had taken them on as mascots, laughing with them but never at them, and in the end the gremlins were supposed to have turned against the Nazis and to have helped win the war.

"I ... I once wrote a bunch of stories about gremlins," Noah said, the words choked and as mushy as boiled squash.

"That's why we've been watching you, Mr. Raymond."

"Wuh-wuh-watching muh-muh —"

"Yes, watching *you*."

Charlie made the blatting sound again. It reminded Noah of unhealthy bowel movements, a kind of aural Toltec Two-Step, vocalizing Montezuma's Revenge.

"We've been on to you for ten years, ever since you wrote 'An Agile Little Mind.' For a human, it wasn't a half-bad attempt at understanding us."

"There isn't much historical data available on guh-guh-gremlins," Noah said, off-the-wall, having trouble even speaking the magic name.

"Very good lineage. Direct lineal descendants of the afrit. The French call us *gamelin*, brats."

"But I thought you were just something the pilots dreamed up during the Battle of Britain to account for things going wrong with their planes."

"Nonsense," said the little man. Charlie hooted. "The first modern mention of us was in 1936, out of the Middle East where the RAF was stationed in Syria. We used the wind mostly. Did some lovely things to their formations when they were on maneuvers. Good deal of tricky Coriolis Force business there."

"You really are real, aren't you?" Noah asked.

Charlie started to say something. Alf turned on him and snapped, "Shut'cher gawb, Charlie!" Then he went back to Mayfair accents as he said to Raymond, "We're a bit pressed tonight, Mr. Raymond. We can discuss reality and mythology another time. In fact, if you'll just sit there quietly for a while, I'll knock off after a bit and let the boys carry on without me. I'll take a break and explain as much to you as you can sustain tonight."

"Uh, sure ... sure ... go ahead. But, uh, what are you writing over there?"

"Why, I thought you understood, Mr. Raymond. We're writing that story for the BBC. We're here from now on to write *all* your stories. Since you can't do it, I shouldn't think you'll mind if we maintain your world-famous reputation for you."

And he put two minuscule fingers in his mouth and gave a blast of a whistle, and before Noah Raymond could say that he was so ashamed of himself he could cry, they were once again bounding up and down on the typewriter.

My *God*, how they worked!

It was simply the Nietzschean theory all over again. Nietzsche suggested that when a god lost all its worshipers, the god itself died. Belief was the sustaining force. When a god's supplicants went over to newer, stronger gods, belief in the weaker deity faded and so did the diety. So it had been with the

gremlins. They were ancient, of course, and they were worshiped in their various forms under various names. Pixies, nixies, goblins, elves, sprites, fairies, will-o-the-wisps, *gamelins* ... gremlins. But when the times were hard and the technocrats rode high, the belief in magic faded, and so did they. Day by day they vanished, one after another. Whole families were wiped out in a morning just by a group of humans switching to Protestantism.

And so, from time to time, they came back in strength with a new method of drawing believers to them. During World War II they had changed and taken on the very raiments of the science-worshipers. They became elves of the mechanical universe: gremlins.

But the war was over, and people no longer believed.

So they had looked around for a promotional gimmick, and they had found seventeen-year-old Noah Raymond. He was quick, and he was imaginative, and he believed. So they waited. A few stories weren't good enough. They wanted a body of work, a world-acclaimed body of work that could sustain them through this difficult period of future shock and automation. Tolkien had done his share, but he was an old man and they knew he couldn't do it alone.

And so, on the night Noah Raymond went dry, they were waiting: a commando force of typewriter assaultists specially trained for throwing themselves into their work in the most literal sense. Tough, unsentimental gremlins with steely eyes and a fierce determination to save their race. Assault Force G-1. Each gremlin a hand-picked veteran of extra-dangerous service. Each gremlin a volunteer. Each gremlin a specialist:

Alf, who had led the assault on the Krupp munitions factory's toilets in 1943.

Charlie, who had shipped aboard the *Titanic* on its maiden voyage, April 10, 1912, as sabotaging supercargo.

Billy, who had been head gremlin in charge of London underground subway disruption since 1952.

Ted, who worked for the telephone company; Joe, who worked for Western Union; Bertie, who worked for the post office.

Chris, who was in charge of making coffee bitter in the brewing throughout the Western Hemisphere.

St. John (pronounced Sin-jin), who supervised a large staff of gremlins assigned to complicating the syntax in the public speeches of minor politicians.

And the others, and their standbys, and their reserve troops, and their replacements, and their back-up support ....

Ready to move in the moment Noah Raymond went dry.

And so they began.

For the next nineteen years they came to Noah Raymond's typewriter every night, and they worked with unceasing energy. Noah would stand watching them for hours sometimes, marveling at the amount of kinetic energy flagrantly expended in the pursuit of survival-as-art.

And the stories spun out of Noah Raymond's typewriter, and he grew more famous, and he grew wealthy, and he grew more complacent as the total of their works with his byline grew from one hundred to two hundred, from two hundred to three hundred, from three hundred to four hundred ....

Until tonight, when Alf stood shamefacedly on the Olympia's carriage housing, his cap in his tiny hands, and said to Noah Raymond, "That's the long and short of it, Noah. We've run dry."

"Now wait a minute, Alf," Noah said, "that's impossible. You've got the entire race of gremlins to choose from, to find talent to keep the stuff coming. I simply cannot believe an entire *race* has run out of ideas!"

"Uh, well, it's not quite like that, Noah." He was obviously embarrassed and had something of special knowledge he was reluctant to say.

"Listen, Alf," Noah said, laying his hand palm-up on the carriage housing so the tiny man could step onto it. "We've been mates now for almost twenty years, right?"

The little man nodded and stepped into Noah's palm.

Noah lifted him to eye-level so they could talk more intimately.

"And in twenty-years-almost I think we've come to understand each other's people pretty fair, wouldn't you say?"

Alf nodded.

"I mean, I even get along pretty well with Charlie these days, when his sciatica isn't bothering him too much."

Alf nodded again.

"And God knows your stories have made things a lot better for the reality of the gremlins, haven't they? And I've done my share with the lectures and the public appearances and all the chat shows on telly, now haven't I?"

Alf nodded once more.

"So then what the hell is this load'a rubbish you're handing me, chum? How can *all* of you have run out of story ideas?"

Alf went harrumph and looked at his feet in their solid workman's boots, and he said with considerable embarrassment, "Well, uh, those weren't stories."

"They weren't stories? Then what were they?"

"The history of the gremlins.

They were all true."

"But they sound like fantasies."

"Life is interesting for us."

"But ... but ..."

"I never mentioned it because it never came up, but the truth of it is that gremlins don't have any sense of what you call imagination. We can't dream things up. We just tell what happened. And we've written everything that's ever happened to our race, right up to date, and we, uh, er, haven't got any more stories."

Noah stared at him with open-mouthed amazement.

"This is awful," Noah said.

"Don't I know it." He hesitated, as if not wanting to say any more; then a look of determination came over his face and he went on. "I wouldn't tell this to just any human, Noah, but you're a good sort, and we've shared a jar or two, so I'll tell you the rest of it."

"The rest of it?"

"I'm afraid so. The program's been working both ways, I'm sorry to say. The more humans came to believe in us, the more we gremlins have come to believe in you. Now it's pretty well fifty-fifty. But without the stories to keep things going, I'm afraid the gremlins are going to start thinking of you again as semireal, and ..."

"Are you trying to tell me that now the gremlins are responsible for the reality of *humans*?"

Alf nodded nervously.

"Oh, shit," Noah suggested.

"Been having a bit of trouble in that area, as well," Alf lamented.

And they sat there, the tiny man in the human's hand, and the human in the hands of the gremlins, and they thought about getting drunk. But they knew that wouldn't help. At least not for very long. It had been a good ride for nineteen years, but the gravy train had been shunted onto a weed-overgrown siding.

And they stayed that way, sunk in silent despair, for most of the night.

Until about three fifteen this morning, when Noah Raymond suddenly looked at Alf and said, "Wait a minute, mate. Let me see if I have this figured out right: if the gremlins stop believing in humans, then the humans start disappearing ... check?"

Alf said, "Check."

"And if the humans start disappearing, then there won't be sufficient of us to keep up the reality of the gremlins, and the *gremlins* start vanishing ... check?"

"Check."

"So that means if we can find a way of writing stories for the gremlins that will reinforce their belief in *us*, it solves the problem ... check?"

"Check. But where do we get that many stories?"

"I've got them."

"*You've* got them? Noah, I like you, but let's not lose sight of reality, old chum. You ran out of ideas nineteen years ago."

"But I've got a source."

"A source for stories?"

"A unified mythology just like your gremlin history. Full of stories. We can pass them off as the truth."

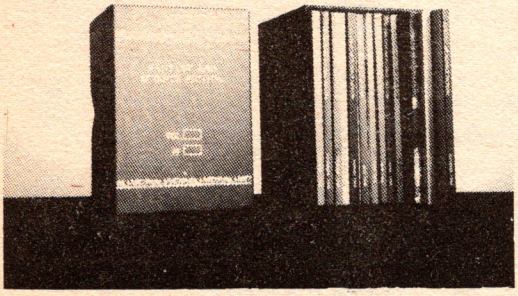
And Noah went into one of the other rooms and came back with a book and opened it to the first page and rolled a fresh piece of typing paper into the Olympia and checked out the ribbon to make sure it was still fresh, and he said to Alf, "This ought to keep us for at least a few years. And in the meantime we can start looking around for another writer to work with us."

And he began to type the opening of the first fantasy he had attempted in nineteen years, a story that would be printed on very small pages in infinitesimal type, to be read by very little people.

And he typed: "In the beginning Kilroy created the heaven and the earth, and the earth was without form and void, and you couldn't get a decent mug of lager anywhere..."

"I like that part," said Alf, dropping his Mayfair accent. "'At's bloody charmin', is what 'at is."

Charlie went *blatttt.*



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Like everyone else, we are attracted to Ellisonian non-fiction as a moth to a flame. And so we asked for a couple of pages of background comment on the stories in the issue. Instead we received this 6,000 word piece full of angry opinion, incredible anecdote, painful autobiography. We should have known, but . . .

You Don't Know Me, I Don't Know You

by HARLAN ELLISON

When I wrote "The Place with No Name" for Ed Ferman, and he published it in F&SF in 1969, he had many outraged letters and a number of cancellations of subscriptions. That was a story in which I toyed with the idea that Christ had had a homosexual liaison with Prometheus.

When I wrote "Basilisk" for F&SF in 1972, a story in which I attacked not just our continued criminal presence in Viet Nam, but made it quite clear that I considered all you stay-at-home, support-the-war-effort types as vile a pack of killers as William Calley, Ed Ferman received threatening letters and more cancellations.

When I rewrote the Book of Genesis from the viewpoint of the Snake, in "The Deathbird," in 1973, and suggested (as had dear sweet old Mark Twain) that if you really thought the universe was ruled by God, and you looked around at the state of the universe, you would be forced to the conclusion that God is a malign thug, all those good and tolerant Children of God and assorted other weirdos cancelled their subscriptions by the drove. Singular. I wasn't *that* big a deal. Only one small drove.

"Croatoan" in 1975 was interpreted by Right to Life advocates as a pro-abortion story, and *they* cancelled; it was viewed as an anti-female story by some feminists, and *they* cancelled; it was viewed as an anti-abortion story by many liberals, and *they* cancelled. The fact that the story was concerned with the ethics of responsibility and was concerned with abortion and/or feminism only as much and in the same way as MOBY DICK

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is concerned with cetacean philosophy, seemed to escape everyone who wrote poor Ed Ferman and called him a miserable sonofabitch for continuing to publish that swine motherfuckah Ellison, the toad of fantasy, the anti-Christ of sf, the dark swimmer in the polluted sea of depraved reject mainstream fiction. (Sound of sackbut, lyre, dulcimer and kazoo.) I went and had a vasectomy.

So one day about a year ago, when I was late getting a story in to Ed — which is usually the case, I'm always Harlequin late, poor Ed — and I was on the long distance line trying to con and jolly him into extending my deadline by a few days, I said to him, "Ed, tell me something: why is it, when you run the kind of apparently trouble-making stories I write, and you keep getting so many subscription cancellations and rotten letters from these turkeys, why is it you *keep* running my work?"

And Ed (who is an even tougher sonofabitch than I am, though his gentle and gentlemanly manner covers it so well only Audrey knows it for sure) said, "Well, I'll tell you ... even if I didn't think they were good stories, which I do, I'd keep running your work and keep putting your name on the cover, because every time I run one of your stories I have twice as many people sign on as I do cancel."

I gotta confess he stopped me with that one.

I sat there grinning wryly. And shaking my head.

He could have buttered me, or he could have said, well, kiddo, *some*one has to publish your shit, or he could have just shrugged it off. But he didn't. He hit me right in my truth. And I flashed on that scene in the movie "The Longest Yard" where Burt Reynolds — in the words of the scenarist, Tracy Keenan Wynn — says, "You know what the trouble with my life has been? I'll tell you. I've got my shit together. I've *always* had my shit together. I just can't lift it."

So here comes chill, truthful Ed Ferman, about two years ago, saying to me, "Let's do a 'Harlan Ellison' issue of F&SF."

"What do I have to do to deserve it, Ed ... drop dead?"

"No, just write a story."

That seemed easy enough.

But, well, hell, I didn't get it done, so he did the Damon Knight issue first, and I can't beef about that; Damon's a good old boy and even though he thinks I disremember the pasts we shared, I like to see these venerable father-figures get an accolade from time to time. And finally my time has rolled around, much to the chagrin and annoyance of the turkeys.

But here comes Ed again, even after I'd said I wanted to do *three*

stories for the issue, not just one, because Ray Bradbury had done two for *his* issue a few years ago, but nobody had ever done three, and I hoped that by doing three it would annoy that growing multitude that conceives of me as an arrogant, gauche loudmouth who never knows when to leave well enough alone ... but even so, here comes Ed suggesting I do an "introduction" to the issue, just like the anthologies and collections I put together.

Occurs to me that Ed Ferman has a thick vein of suicidal behavior in him.

So I'm sitting here in Geo. Alec Effinger's apartment on Prytania Street in New Orleans, while Bev and George and gorgeous Susan are out hustling for beads and doubloons at the Rex parade, it's Mardi Gras and I'm inside writing words for Ed Ferman instead of having a helluva good time goofing off, and I'm wondering just how much truth Ed and you readers can handle in the honorable name of "upfront."

And I decide, screw it; let them have it all, because it's been a shitty few months and maybe just this once the clowns who are pissed off that Silverberg and Malzberg and Lupoff and Effinger and the rest of us don't want "sci-fi" on our books will get sufficiently doused with cold truth so they'll stop looking at those of us who write this stuff with that peculiar brand of tunnel vision that is half deification and half hatred.

(*Now* what the hell's he angry about? Every time I turn around that creep Ellison is shooting off his big mouth about some fancied crime or other. Can't open my morning paper or turn on the box without hearing that strident voice complaining about some damnthing or other. What the devil does *he* have to be angry at? He makes a lot of money, he gets laid regularly, there are even people dumb enough to think he has some writing talent. And here he's got this whole bloody *magazine* devoted to feeding his twisted ego. You'd think he'd have enough grace to just say something short and polite and let his stories do the talking for him. But no, he's *angry* again! Now what?)

Angry? Heaven forfend, gentle readers. I wouldn't want to disturb your sleep.

Nonetheless, in the spirit of creative troublemaking, come with me to the October 4th, 1976 issue of *Publishers Weekly*, the "bible of the book industry." In the pages of PW one can gauge one's stature in the publishing world, assess one's worth with one's peer-group and, more importantly, with the plantation owners who keep us poor wretches laboring in their fields.

Let us glance at the cover of the

October 4th, 1976 issue of PW, where we see a full-page ad for Sterling Hayden's first novel, VOYAGE. Putnam's has taken this ad, as they have the next ten pages, to announce their winter list. It's unveiling time for one of the major publishers, and they're stating for all the world to see the importance of their forthcoming titles.

Come with me, then, on this voyage of status and hope.

I promise you it'll be worth the trip.

Now. We start with Sterling Hayden. He gets almost one hundred large-type words of thrilling copywriters' adreneline, including announcements that VOYAGE is a full selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club, paperback rights have been sold for more than a half-million dollars, there will be TV appearances by the author, as well as major national advertising, publicity and promotion, not to mention a 50,000 copy first printing. Add to all this a snappy perspective photo of the book itself and the fact that its's *on the front cover of PW,* and only the dullest among us can fail to perceive that this is a B*I*G B*O*O*K!!!

Well, okay. Hayden can write. WANDERER, back in 1963, his autobiography, was a smashing book. He deserves all this attention. No complaints.

Now we open the issue and plunge pell-mell into Putnam's winter list, in order of importance and (as Putnam's views it) saleability.

Pages 2 and 3 contain six books, three to a page ... still with full-cover photos of each book, titles set in large black, eye-catching type, each one with a dense block of promotional copy, and each one bearing the potent slugline, "Major Advertising & Promotion." Among these books are a biography of Clark Gable, a "dazzling biography that read like the most romantic novel," and a book of "startlingly intimate portraits" titled GINGER, LORETTA AND IRENE *WHO*? Each of these six is trumpeted as being the forerunner of a motion picture version or is to be accompanied by TV appearances by the author or is a full selection of this book club or that. Impressive.

Pages 4 and 5, another six. Each one to receive "Major Advertising & Promotion," another six full-cover photos, six more blocks of breathless advertising copy, and on and on.

Page 6. Six books on one page, but still with full-cover photos, albeit smaller, of course. The titles say it all: NINE MOONS WASTED by Marianne Lamont; THIS OTHER EDEN by Marilyn Harris; FOXGLOVE SUMMER by Naidra Grey; SWEET'S FOLLY by Fiona

Hill; and more hype copy. Page 7 has two more romances, one by Jean Plaidy and one by Claire Rayner, as well as a Jack Douglas book of funny "misadventures," whatever that means. Three on this page, each with "Major Advertising & Etcetera." Full-cover photos. Lotta hype. Quotes.

Page 8 and page 9: six and six, including such well-promoted winners as MOON SIGNS by Sybil Leek; SINISTER PEOPLE, The Looking-Glass World of the Left-Hander; GILBERT AND SULLIVAN AND THEIR VICTORIAN WORLD; and a book of myths and heroes of the Viking Age. Each has a cover photo; each has a block of copy, each has its title in easily-read heavy black headline type.

On Page 9, four-fifths of the page is devoted to six titles, two westerns and four mysteries. Each one has a full-cover photo, each one has a big bold title, each one has a block of promotional copy wherein the words spectacular, taut, exciting, delightful, gripping, intriguing and exciting *new* appear with the frequency of chocolate chips in a Famous Amos Cookie.

Now pay close attention.

At the bottom of page 9, positionally only the minutest fraction more important than the books on gardening and microwave cookery that live on page 10, are four titles in the bottom one-fifth of the page. These four books are labeled with a genre designation *as no other books in this 54 book list* have been ghettoized! The label, not to put too fine or obvious a point on it, is SCIENCE FICTION.

The four books are Spider Robinson's first novel, the new F.M. Busby and the new Poul Anderson and ...

OUR LADY OF DARKNESS by Fritz Leiber.

There are no cover photos. There is no advertising hype. There is no explanatory copy block. The titles are small. No words like "exciting" or "taut" or even "spectacular." Just the title of the book, the author's name, the Library of Congress catalog number, date of publication and price.

Fritz Leiber's first novel in eight years, down at the very bottom of the next-to-last page of his publishers' seasonal trumpeting? Fritz Leiber, the finest fantasist in the world, a man whose work has influenced every writer of imaginative literature since the Thirties. Wonderful, magical Fritz Leiber, before whom Bradbury and Sturgeon and Norton and Goldman and Barth and Vonnegut bow, not to mention Robinson, Busby, Anderson and even yours truly, the maddest egomaniac of them all. Fritz Leiber, very likely the best of all of us, the man who has won more awards than anyone else in

the genre, the man whose words have lifted this too-often wretched category to Olympian heights more times than anyone cares to mention. Fritz Leiber's first novel in eight years is buried at the bottom of Putnam's discard pile, secure in their 1200-copy library sale, without Major Advertising & Promotion and screw the old man!?!

Fritz Leiber's first novel in eight years isn't as worthy of attention as the tyro novel of an actor, no matter how well it's written ... it isn't as important as Sybil Leek's astrological bullshit ... it isn't as important as a pair of westerns ... it isn't as important as a six-pack of insipid romantic novels ...?

Why is that asshole Ellison angry?

Why does he insist "science fiction" be deleted from his books, and nowhere be permitted in advertising or promotion of what he writes? (Though God knows it's virtually impossible to stop half-witted collegiate reporters from slapping "sci-fi" into the headline when they interview him for college lectures.)

Ellison is angry, gentle readers, because Zsa Zsa Gabor has unlimited access to The Johnny Carson Show where her observations on Fiscal Responsibility are only slightly less illuminating than Don Rickles's views about The Ethical Structure of the Universe and one of *our* finest young "sci-fi" writers can't fight off the medical collection agencies trying to collect from his last three major operations while he waits with happy thoughts about his *fourth* exploratory, coming up next month. The big mouth is angry because the bestseller lists include the mediocre dribblings of Leon Uris, Rod McKuen, Jaqueline Susann, Allen Drury and Harold Robbins, while another of our giants of "sci-fi" lives in a one-room apartment in the slum section of a major American city, sitting on the edge of his bed with his typewriter on a kitchen chair, his Hugos shoved away on a high shelf because he hasn't room for them in that cramped space where he exists in poverty.

You don't know me. You don't know any of us. You live in your little Utopia of dreams, not realizing that the men and women you totemize at conventions return, in too many cases, to lives to anonymity and financial deprivation. You are instantly on your guard against any of us promoting ourselves, "selling out" to make a decent living, without understanding that most of the terrific publishers whom you revere still pay the biggest name authors little better than they did twenty-five years ago, when a loaf of bread was 13¢ and a cup of coffee was a nickel. You buy ripoff cassettes of the writers'

speeches and readings, without understanding that you are contributing to the theft of annuities. You think it mercenary and bad taste when writers demand payment for their appearances at conventions. You think all of us live in crystal palaces, surrounded by slavish toadies who do our bidding for the glory of being in The Presence Magical.

And when one or another of us says, "Why, when I'm writing brilliant novels of deep human perceptivity, does *Perry Rhodan* sell millions of copies while my books go out of print?" and then opts out of the rat race, you bare your fangs and run white feather numbers on us. Traitor to the Cause! Quisling! Coward! Sour grapes!

You don't know me, and I don't know you.

I don't know any of you who write me letters and tell me either how my stories have altered your lives immeasurably or how my stories are sick and twisted and how I obviously hate women because I had a dog eat a girl in one of them.

How can you know people who refuse to permit your humanity? How can you relate to people who either see you as a monster whose works are created solely to shock and corrupt the Natural Order, or who deify you as if you were the shade of Voltaire?

How can I know, when you choose to read craziness into my words? When you think every story I write is an accurate and faithful representation of my life? When, if I write about homosexuality or drug addiction or venality or violence, you start your imbecilic rumor-mill that I'm gay, a junkie, greedy beyond rationality or a crazed killer?

You think I jest? Let me give you an apocryphal one.

Several years ago, at the last sf convention I attended without being paid a speaking fee to appear, the World Convention in Washington, D.C., I found myself quite late one night, wasted and exhausted, standing in front of an elevator, waiting for the car to arrive to take me upstairs to my floor, to my room, to my bed, to blessed sleep. Understand: it was three or four in the morning, I was weary beyond belief, and minding my own business. As I stood there waiting, a rather large, fleshy young man festooned with buttons saying things like FIAWOL and TANSTAAFL and SF FANS EAT THEIR YOUNG approached the elevator.

When he saw me, he did a double-take. Then an expression I've come to recognize and despise crossed his face. It was that insipid melding of antagonism and superciliousness that I have learned from bitter experience precedes some

smartass remark intended to make the fan think he's into clever repartee. As these remarks usually emanate from terminal acne teenagers with overactive thyroids and underdeveloped manners, I have yet to be gifted with a line that does not reek of cliche and sophomorism.

(You don't know me. I'm forty-two years old, and I've spent a good part of my life with the wittiest, cleverest, most innovative people of my time. I've heard the best and the brightest indulging their conversational muses. Some great lines, a lot of whacky linkages, terrific humor and originality. And you ... you *pishers* ... you really think some derivative, cornball insult out of St. Louis or Joplin is going to be *new* to me? Be even the fleetingest momentarily clever so you'll receive the dollop of cheap attention your miserable little ego demands? Don't be ridiculous. When you can beat Groucho Marx or Bella Abzug or Mel Torme with a clever line, *then* you can come around and try to bug me. Until then, stay in the Pony League.)

The elevator arrived, the doors opened, I entered and the beefy adolescent did the same. I pushed the button for my floor, which was quite high up in the building, but the kid didn't push a button for *his* floor. If I thought about it — and you must remember I was really out of it, just hanging against the wall with my eyes down and my energy-level low — I suppose I concluded he was on the same floor as I.

But no sooner had the doors closed than the kid struck a pose. Arms folded, legs apart, staring at me with insolence, as if about to say something devastating. I hung against the wall, thinking, *Gimme a little slack, willya, kid. No bullshit tonight. I'm too tired.*

But the rudeness of that kind of simp is beyond measure. And beyond logic or restraint. He stood there arrogantly and said, "You're a lot shorter than I thought you'd be."

I ignored him. I was in no mood.

Anyone playing with a full deck would have taken the hint. It was by no means a subtle hint. I clearly didn't want to be messed with. But like so many of his type, stupidity and unjustified arrogance make unsatisfactory bedmates, and he thought he was stacking points because I hadn't told him to shut up, or punched him out, or done something that would permit him to lie to his friends about how he'd "destroyed Ellison."

So he kept it up. Kept insulting me — a total stranger — all the way up to my floor.

Then, when the elevator slowed and was stopping, I looked up and moved toward the front doors of the

cage. He stepped in front of me, arms akimbo. I stood there as the elevator rose to a stop, and waited for him to move, but he didn't. He just stood in front of me, facing me, hands on his hips, as if daring me to do something. It not only became clear to me at this point that he didn't live on the same floor as I, but that he very likely had taken the entire elevator trip just to piss me off.

As the doors opened behind him, without even looking, I reached out very quickly with my right hand, and closed my fingers around his throat. Not hard enough to crush the sucker's windpipe, but hard enough to propel him backward easily. Out of the elevator, around in a half-circle, and pushed him back into the elevator, just as the doors closed. It was all done very smoothly, very quickly, and with an absolute minimum of emotional involvement. He had been an impediment to my progress toward a good nights' sleep, and I had simply *moved* him.

But as I turned around from the closed elevator doors, I saw what I had missed seeing when the doors had first opened — probably because my eyes were downcast and I was concentrating on grabbing the simp's throat. Standing there, mouths open, gaping at the sight of the killer and his prey, was a group of six or eight fans who had apparently left a party and were on their way down to the lobby. They had seen the doors open, and without warning the crazed Ellison had attacked this poor, defenseless fan.

I said nothing to them, simply turned down the corridor and went to my room and went to bed.

But the *next* day ...

The rumor all over the convention hotel was that Ellison had thrown a fan down an elevator shaft.

Many people believed it.

None of them bothered to ask why the police hadn't been called, or how I'd managed to get the elevator doors open when the cage wasn't there so my victim *could* be tossed down a shaft, or if the victim was dead, and if he was, had the body been removed, or was it still lying down there at the bottom, broken and beginning to smell bad, and why hadn't Ellison been arrested?

They simply believed it. They don't know me, and I don't want to know them.

And just to deny the rumor-mill any fresh material (not that it needs actual material when it works so well from whole cloth), let me tell you where the three new stories in this issue of F&SF came from. In that way, at least, I'll save myself from having to endure the boring recitations in half-witted fanzines

that purport to be knowledgeable analyses of what I *really* meant, analyses of the twisted psychosexual references that fill the stories. I'll free myself of having to bear that silliness, at least for these three stories. Which means all the rest are still fair game for the functional illiterates who do most of the fanzine critiques.

"Working with the Little People" was written in one straight stretch of effort in the front window of a bookstore on Charing Cross Road in London, Tuesday 20 July 1976. The bookstore was *Words and Music*, and I was reprising my sitting-in-the-bookstore-window-writing-a-story-a-day number as detailed more thoroughly in F&SF last October. It is not a representation of myself, in any way. It is, I suppose, an open letter to a famous fantasy writer on whose wonderful stories I grew up. This writer is a person who has become a good friend, someone I love. And because of my respect and affection for this writer, and because of the germinal effect on my writing that the body of this writer's work had on me during my formative years, it is impossible for me to say to this writer, you stopped writing your best work over twenty years ago. It is impossible for me to take this writer aside and say, "Just for a moment let's forget that we're both eminently successful, that we're canonized by fans and critics. *They don't know*! But *we* know. We know what each of us is writing, and we know when the time has come that we're only indulging ourselves because our fame is such that they'll buy what*ever* we write, no matter how ineffective or slapdash. For just a moment let's forget we're who we are, and just look at what you've been doing for twenty years!" No, it's not possible for me to tell this writer of classic stature that somehow the publicity and the fame and the totemization have gotten in the way of writing the stories that made the fame in the first place.

Ego forms the greater part of whatever nameless amalgam it is that sustains a writer. We live off it, every one of us, no matter how ostensibly humble or arrogant we may seem to our readers. The mildest of us, nonetheless, has an ability to sustain himself through sheer will, through sheer belief in the cosmic *correctness* of what we do. Every word we set down, every choice of line and color and structure is surfeited with that ego. I cannot tell this writer that the vision has grown dim. The talent is still there, as rich and as dark as before. But the world and its praise, its wonders and treasures, has gotten in the way. I may be wrong. The later stories may be the best this writer has ever produced; but

unless I read all the critics wrong, and unless I read the tenor of this writer's audience wrong, and unless I read my own loving perceptions of this writer's work wholly incorrectly ... the main path has been abandoned.

So this story is my gentle way of speaking to this writer.

Perhaps the writer will recognize what I'm doing in "Working with the Little People." And perhaps I'll get a phone call and this writer, with whom I talk frequently, will say, "I read your story. Did you mean me?" And I'll say, fearfully, "Yeah." And perhaps the writer will say, "Let's talk. I'm not sure you know what the hell you're talking *about*, but at least you cared enough to say it and risk my wrath and the loss of my friendship; so at least let's sit down alone and thrash it out."

I *hope* that's the way it will happen.

As for the second story, "Alive and Well and on a Friendless Voyage," well, that one seems to distress my friends a bit. Arthur Cover says he thinks it may be self-pitying. Richard Delap wonders if I'm not exploiting my own life. Geo. Alec Effinger thinks it's one of my most important stories. But most of my friends who've read it refuse to talk to me about it. I can understand that.

This is one of those few stories I've written not only to write a story, to provide an entertainment, but as personal therapy. I wrote it during the period after the breakup of my recent marriage. It was my fourth marriage, and not one I entered into lightly.

You see, you don't know me. Many of you think that four marriages is an indication of frivolity or confusion or bad judgment. They may be *all* of those, but as far as I'm concerned, they are also indications that I'm alive. Everyone wants action, adventure and danger in their life ... but no one wants risk. Everyone wants guarantees of security.

Friends, there is no security this side of the grave.

I've said that before.

I say it again.

I married in June of 1976 and I separated on November 20th of 1976. She was sleeping with another man. That seems pretty slim reason for dissolution of a marriage. particularly in my case, because I've never felt that merely because you marry someone that your mate's body belongs to you. Slavery went out of fashion a long time ago. But there was lying, duplicitousness, insincerity, and a great many other elements that destroyed trust. And without trust, without friendship, there is nothing. One is left with dust.

I loved her. In the words of one

of the characters in the story, "Without reserve. I showed it in a million ways, every hour of the day that we spent together." But love is hardly enough to sustain a relationship, dear friends. And it fell apart, and so did I.

And one night three or four months after I had asked her to leave, and she had gone to live with her paramour, I was sitting in the darkness of my living room watching the American Film Theater's production of *Jaques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris* on our Los Angeles unedited-movie channel, and something I cannot even remember in that production, some moment of melancholy as expressed through Brel's exquisite songs, sparked the basic idea for this story.

I'm frequently asked where my ideas come from. I usually can remember where the story was written, and under what special circumstances; but less often I'm able to recall just what precise elements came together in my mind to form the basic concept of a given piece of writing. That's the case with "Alive and Well and On a Friendless Voyage." All I know for certain is that I went in and sat down at the typewriter and did the first two pages of the story.

And I realized from the start that it was my way of writing out my pain and loneliness.

You see, you don't know me and I don't know you. The ways in which you bring your pain under control, the ways in which you maintain your sanity ... they are not mine. I live in another world; each of us does. But I know this of myself: I can keep going. That's one of the things life is all about ... *maintaining*. And that is what the story is about.

In the space of three or four months toward the end of last year — the most terrible period in my entire life — my mother died, my wife cuckolded me and left, I suffered staggering financial difficulties, endured personal illness, went more than a little crazy ... but *maintained*. Now I'm on the other side of it all. And that's what the story is about. It is the grail I have brought back from that awful place. It is the artifact that shows I felt the fire but did not let it destroy me.

All of the foregoing, sententious though it may read, is straight from where my thoughts live, to you. Take it or leave it. It's not as if none of you had ever asked.

But my favorite of the three stories in this issue is the one called "Jeffty is Five." I began this story during a New Year's party at the home of my friend Walter Koenig. We were all sitting around in Walter & Judy's living room, and there was a group of people who

were mostly the Koenigs' friends, not mine. Nice people, I just didn't know them very well. And I was sitting there sorta kinda doing and thinking nothing, just goofing and relaxing, playing with Walter's kids, when I *intentionally mis-overheard* a line of conversation.

Let me explain that.

Quite a lot of the time (probably more of the time than a psychiatrist would consider sane or rational), I intentionally hear things wrong. If someone says, "I went to the Chinese hand laundry this afternoon," I visualize it in my mind as an enormous, steamy plant where they launder Chinese hands. Or how about this one: the other night I was talking to Nancy Schwartz and one or the other of us mentioned tubal ligation. I chose to hear it as tubal *libation* and proceeded to run half a dozen horrendous puns on the historic precedent of magic being attendant on the drinking of menstrual blood. Don't be shocked, dummies, Sturgeon once wrote an entire novel on the theme.

Then Nancy did tubal *legation*, I did *tonal relation*, she did *tribal locution* and we were busy for half an hour being as improbable as possible.

Because of this flaw in my nature, this desire to hear things a little stranger than the speaker intended, I heard a snatch of perfectly ordinary conversation as something like this, "So I went to see Jeff, and he was still five ... he's always five ..." and my mind flashed on a little boy who has been snared at the age of five, who never gets any older. And I asked Walter for a typewriter, and he brought me a portable, and I plonked it on a chair and did the first several pages of the story in this issue. (Except I rewrote those first two hurried pages considerably.) But the story would go no further.

It wasn't till I came down here to New Orleans that I discovered what my story was about. From New Year's till February it just festered and simmered. But then, while talking to George and Beverly last evening, while talking about how times have changed and about how we're losing so many wonderful things that meant so much to us and which we took so much for granted, did I understand what Jeffty and his story was all about. And so today I've been sitting here writing this introduction, and when it gets too boring I stop and work on Jeffty a little.

And Jeffty is so real to me, so important to me, that I'm writing about him very slowly. I don't want the story to be ended. I want Jeffty to go on forever.

Because you don't know me, and you don't know that there is a part of Jeffty that is me, very much me, achingly me.

Which brings me, I suppose, to the end of this introduction that poor Ed Ferman so foolishly suggested I write.

I swear to you: I had intended only to say thank you very much for coming this evening, folks, and it's been a terrific pleasure writing for you. I intended to be brief and very gracious. But who the hell would I be kidding? I'm not that gracious, and if I'd ever wanted to be brief I'd either have become a poet or taken up selling Fruit of the Loom underwear.

So, six thousand words later, I tag off mumblingly, wondering precisely *what* I had to say that was endemic to this special issue of F&SF; probably nothing of any consequence. Except to point out that all the king's horses and all the king's men, and all the academy's critics and all the establishment's analysts, and all of fandom's turkeys and all of their fanzine editors cannot fathom or reconstruct the mind that writes these stories. Nor the minds that write Leiber's stories and Sturgeon's stories, or Borges's stories and Vonnegut's stories, or Wilhelm's stories or Effinger's stories. We are all alone, each of us, existing in worlds we make fresh each day. And those of you who are granted the views into our worlds are like tourists going into *Terra Incognita* after we've blazed the trails.

But don't ever fool yourselves. Not even those of you who make your living from literary analyses. Don't for a second fool yourselves into thinking you've got our number.

Because even if I reveal some small truth about the human heart in my work, strictly serendipitously, strictly by chance, I really don't know you, and that's the way I want to keep it, because I subscribe to what H. L. Mencken said: "It is precisely at their worst that human beings are most interesting."

I want to keep being surprised by all of you.

How boring it would be if *all* of you were as predictable and dull as so many of you seem to be.

Those of you out there whom I'll meet and write about one day: I don't know you.

And for all the rest of you ...

Believe it, kiddo: you don't know me.

You will not learn about Harlan and the Chinese waiter or Harlan and the birdbath here, but Robert Silverberg's article will give you an amusing and affectionate portrait of the author as a young and middle-aged man.

Harlan

by ROBERT SILVERBERG

We met for the first time in the summer of 1953, at the World Science Fiction Convention, which was held at Philadelphia's Bellevue-Stratford Hotel. (Yes, the same hotel that went out of business in 1976 after the outbreak of a mysterious lethal blight among the American Legion. I wouldn't be at all surprised if some fan at *our* convention had salted the place with spores of the 23-Year Plague.) Our previous contacts had been by mail and telephone, but I had heard descriptions of him from a mutual friend, and I spotted him almost the instant I walked into the hotel. He was the little guy in the center of the crowd, doing all the talking and obviously holding his audience in the palm of his hand.

"Ellison?" I said. "Silverberg."

He said something snide out of the corner of his mouth, and a deep and strange friendship was born.

He was about nineteen, then, and lived in Cleveland. I was a trifle younger, and lived in Brooklyn. We were both fans, then, who published fanzines. Mine was dignified, quiet, and serious, full of sober articles on the history of science fiction. Harlan's magazine was gaudy, flamboyant, enormous, and raucous, with vociferous headlines calling attention to sensational exposes of the science fiction world's soft underbelly. ("The mad dogs have kneed us in the groin again" was a classic Ellisonism of the era.) By your fanzines ye shall know them, I guess; we were of very different personalities, and what we published reflected that. I suppose we really had only one important thing in common in 1953: a passionate desire to be a writer. A science fiction writer, specifically.

Two Ellison episodes of that 1953 convention remain clearly with me after almost a quarter of a century. One occurred on the convention's last night. A certain obscure fan from New York had taken offense at some remarks of Harlan's and had journeyed to Philadelphia that Monday for the purpose of "getting" him, bringing along a pair of brawny goons for support. The sinister-looking trio — leather jackets, slicked-back hair, all the totems of the teen-age hood of the time — converged on Harlan in the lobby. Any sensible man would have vanished at once, or at least yelled for help. Harlan? Sensible? He stood his ground, snarled back at his much bigger adversaries in a nose-to-nose confrontation, and avoided mayhem through a display of sheer bravado. Which demonstrates one Ellison trait: physical courage to the verge of idiocy. Unlike many tough-talking types, Ellison is genuinely fearless. He wins some and he loses some — I can think of a couple that he lost spectacularly — but he never backs off.

The other significant incident took place at the banquet of that convention. The toastmaster (Robert Bloch? Isaac Asimov?) broke into the flow of routine banquet schticks with a special announcement of interest to anyone in the audience who knew Harlan Ellison. (And that was just about everyone, even though he'd been involved in the world of s-f fandom only a couple of years at that time.) Harlan, he said, working in collaboration with another gifted young fan named David Ish, had sold a short story called "Monkey Business" to Anthony Boucher's *Fantasy & Science Fiction*. A beaming Harlan rose to take a bow and the grand ballroom of the Bellevue-Stratford rang with applause. As a would-be writer myself, still waiting for that first letter of acceptance, I felt a certain tincture of envy mixed with my admiration. But the announcement was a bit premature. Harlan and Dave hadn't quite sold "Monkey Business" yet; they had merely *submitted* it. In due time Tony Boucher read it and rejected it, doubtless with great courtesy, but a courteous rejection is still something short of a sale. To Harlan's eager imagination it had seemed that a story so good was certain to be sold, and he had begun telling people that weekend that he *had* sold it. Which illustrates a second Ellison trait: a hunger for literary success so powerful that it dissolves the fine but vital distinction between fact and fantasy.

For a long time, all of Harlan's literary triumphs were of that same illusory nature. In December of 1953 he came to New York and visited me at Columbia University,

where I was then a sophomore. My roommate was out of town, and Harlan stayed with me at the one-room apartment I shared just off-campus. In a pizzeria on Amsterdam Avenue we discussed our dreams of future professional success. In my case the future had already begun, for in the few months since the Bellevue-Stratford convention I had sold a couple of stories and even a novel, *Revolt on Alpha C*. Harlan, too, had "sold" a novel — a 27,000-word juvenile called *Starstone*, which, aided by a recommendation from Andre Norton, he had sold to the prestigious Gnome Press. Only it wasn't so. Harlan was anticipating reality again, and ultimately reality failed him.

He went back to Cleveland, and I didn't hear much from him for over a year. In such time as I could spare from my classes I pursued my writing career with sporadic success, getting a few more short stories published and a second novel rejected. In the spring of 1955, Harlan reappeared in New York, this time to stay. He rented a room on the floor below mine and set up a literary factory — desk, typewriter, paper clips, postage box, dictionary and other reference books, white typing paper, yellow second sheets, memo file, and all the other paraphernalia of our trade. Everything was fastidiously arranged, each item in its proper place. Another Ellison trait: he is neat. His private life may sometimes be a shambles, his schedule of obligations may be running seven months late, but his physical surroundings are always meticulous, even now when he lives in a sprawling Los Angeles house splendidly jammed with books, records, paintings, artifacts, and miscellaneous memorabilia.

The summer of 1955 was a long, hot, brutal one for Harlan. He took a job in a Times Square bookstore to cover his expenses and spent his nights at the typewriter. But he didn't sell a thing. There was the famous time when he told me that he had a crime story "90 percent sold" to *Manhunt* — for so he had been told by an editor of that once-celebrated hard-boiled-fiction magazine. But in fact *Manhunt* never bothered to look at unagented manuscripts, and Harlan's story turned up in the mailbox the next day bearing a printed rejection slip. Getting the last 10 percent of that sale had been too much to manage.

A few weeks later Harlan swaggered into my room and proudly declared, "You'll be pleased to know that I hit Campbell today, Bob." I had an immediate vision of the towering John Campbell sagging to the floor of his office, blood spouting from his impressive nose, while a triumphant Harlan stood

over him stomping the great editor's cigaret holder and nasal inhaler into ruin. But no: "to *hit*" an editor is or was writerese for selling him a story, and all Harlan meant was that he had just cracked the toughest and most demanding of science fiction markets, *Astounding SF*. He hadn't, though.

So it went for him, one imaginary sale after another in a hellish summer of frustration and failure. That I was now selling stories at a nice clip did not improve Harlan's frame of mind, for our friendship always had a component of rivalry in it. When Randall Garrett moved to New York and settled in the apartment hotel where Harlan and I lived, he swiftly went into collaboration not with Harlan, the thwarted amateur, but with Silverberg, the successful new pro: another wound for Harlan to endure. Other s-f people, not writers but fans, also settled in what was fast becoming a kind of crazy commune on West 114th Street, and some of them treated Harlan's desperate boasts of imminent professional success with harsh contempt. The summer became a nightmare for him. Rejected by all editors, mocked and teased by his friends, he clung somehow to his goal and banged out an immense, bloated, preposterous novelette called "Crackpot Planet." He sent it off to one of the upper-level magazines of the day, *If*, and then went back to Cleveland to visit his family.

Now I had read most of Harlan's stories that summer, and many of them seemed of full professional quality to me. There was one called "Glowworm" that struck me as a bit on the bombastic side but alive with vivid images and eerie intensity, and there was one called "Life Hutch" that I thought was an altogether tight and neat little puzzle story that wouldn't have disgraced the pages of John Campbell's *Astounding*. Those two had been rejected all over the place, and I couldn't understand why. But "Crackpot Planet" was, I felt, a true dog, an absurdity, a mess, and I told him so. Harlan shrugged. Not worth the postage to send it to a magazine, I said. He shrugged again. And went to Cleveland.

A couple of weeks passed. I checked his mailbox regularly and forwarded anything of interest — rejection slips, mostly — to him. One day I looked in the box and there was a letter from *If*. They were buying "Crackpot Planet," all 17,000 silly words of it.

It wasn't Harlan's first sale. By this time Larry Shaw had bought "Glowworm" for his new magazine, *Infinity*, and a sleazy yellow-journalism magazine had purchased a serious article Harlan had done on kid-gang life, distorting it

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Filter Brands (Regulars)	MG TAR	MG NIC
Kent Golden Lights* — King Size	**8**	**0.7**
Lucky 100's — 100mm	9	0.6
Pall Mall Extra Mild — King Size	10	0.7
Vantage — King Size	10	0.7
Parliament* — King Size	10	0.8
Doral — King Size	13	0.9
Multifilter — King Size	13	0.8
Marlboro Lights — King Size	13	0.8
Winston Lights — King Size	13	0.9
Raleigh Extra Mild — King Size	14	1.0
Viceroy Extra Mild — King Size	14	1.0
Fact — King Size	14	1.0
Viceroy — King Size	16	1.0
Virginia Slims — 100mm	16	0.9
L&M — 100mm	17	1.1
Benson & Hedges — 100mm	18	1.0
Pall Mall — King Size	18	1.2
Lark — King Size	18	1.1
Marlboro — King Size	18	1.1
Winston — King Size	19	1.2
Tareyton — King Size	20	1.3
Lowest of All Brands Sold	0.5	0.05

*FTC Method

Filter Brands (Menthols)	MG TAR	MG NIC
Kent Golden Lights Menthol* — Kings	**8**	**0.7**
Iceberg — 100mm	9	0.6
Vantage — King Size	11	0.7
Multifilter — King Size	11	0.7
Doral — King Size	11	0.8
Salem Lights — King Size	11	0.8
Fact — King Size	13	0.9
Kool Milds — King Size	14	0.9
Marlboro — King Size	14	0.8
Belair — King Size	15	1.0
Alpine — King Size	15	0.8
Virginia Slims — 100mm	16	0.9
Saratoga — 120mm	16	1.0
Silva Thins — 100mm	16	1.1
Pall Mall — 100mm	16	1.2
Eve — 100mm	17	1.1
Kool — King Size	17	1.4
Benson & Hedges — 100mm	18	1.0
Salem — King Size	18	1.2
Winston — 100mm	19	1.2
More — 120mm	21	1.6
Lowest of All Brands Sold	0.5	0.05

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out of all recognition when they published it. But those two sales had been to friends of Harlan's and so perhaps were tainted by personal sympathies. The sale to *If* had been coldly professional: a story sent off to a strange editor in another city, an acceptance coming back. Harlan was in.

There was no stopping him after that. By the end of 1956, he was selling at least a story a week, and in the subsequent couple of decades he's never had much difficulty persuading editors to buy his wares. His early work was awkward and raw — a weird compound of Nelson Algren and Lester del Rey, in which he managed to absorb the worst features of each, meld them, add liberal dollops of Hemingway, Walt Whitman, Ed Earl Repp, and Edgar Allen Poe, and top off everything with a wild melange of malapropisms. (As of 1955 he wasn't sure of the difference between "decorum" and "decollete.") But there was a core of throbbing excitement within all that verbal nonsense, and the inner power remained within him as the outer junk sloughed away with maturity. And so came the stories that won him his flotilla of Hugos — "Repent, Harlequin," "The Beast That Shouted Love," "I Have No Mouth," and the rest — and so came the fiery, passionate essays, and the savage and eloquent contemporary fiction, the best of which you can find in his book *Love Ain't Nothing But Sex Misspelled.* Out of that cauldron of an imagination came such stuff as "Pretty Maggie Moneyeyes," with that elegant last line that may be the best single moment in all of Ellison's thousands of stories. Out of it, too, came the novella "A Boy and His Dog," which was submitted to me for *New Dimensions*, circa 1969, and which I rejected with a two-page, single-spaced catalog of its faults, and which went on to win a Nebula and became a motion picture, and which I would reject all over again, maybe with a three-page letter, if it came to me tomorrow. Shows you how much *I* know.

But I don't really want to talk about Harlan's stories here. You can find the stories on your own; what you can't find, unless I give it to you, is such knowledge as this: I saved Harlan's life twice. (Blame him on me, folks.)

The first time was in 1955 and probably doesn't really count, because what I ostensibly saved him from was suicide and Harlan is one of the least suicidal human beings I know. But he was deeply depressed — this was during the time of 90 percent sales and instant rejection slips — and talked darkly of jumping out the window of his third-floor apartment. I was living down the hall. I nodded and indicated his

bookcase. "Be sure to leave the door unlocked when you do it," I told him amiably. "You've got some stuff here I want to read." He shut the window.

In the summer of 1956, he and I attended the first Milford Science Fiction Writers' Conference, held at a ramshackle resort on the Delaware River not far from the homes of Damon Knight, Judith Merril, and James Blish, the organizers of the meeting. Most of the demigods of the field were there — Ted Sturgeon, Cyril Kornbluth, Phil Klass, Kate MacLean, Fred Pohl, and who-all else — and we were by many years the youngest and most brash of the writers present. One sunny afternoon, while most of the demigods were discussing the problems demigods have, Harlan and I went down to the river for a swim. Boldly we set out from shore, and rapidly we found ourselves being swept toward Philadelphia or perhaps Cuba by an inexorable current. We began to struggle toward a sand flat midway across the river; and, as we swam, I glanced over at Harlan and saw that he was in very serious difficulties indeed.

Which was odd. Harlan is a short, compact man of considerable muscular strength. (I found that out a few years later, when I tried to dunk him in a Seattle swimming pool and ended up under water myself.) I'm a head taller than Harlan, but I'm a slender and not notably brawny man. Why he was having so much trouble with the current that day, while I was making my way fairly easily in it, I don't understand. But he seemed to be at the end of his endurance. I looked toward shore and caught sight of Judith Merril and a few other workshoppers; I waved to them, trying to indicate we were in trouble, and they blithely waved back. (Perhaps they understood the message and were exercising the most effective form of literary criticism.) Since none of them budged toward the water, it was all up to me. So I swam toward Harlan, grabbed him somehow, and hauled him through the water until my feet were touching bottom. It was half an hour or so before he felt strong enough to leave the sand flat for the return journey. Later that day, some of the demigods soundly rebuked me for my heroism, but I have only occasionally regretted saving Harlan from drowning.

In the autumn of 1956 Harlan married, right before my very eyes. (I have attended three of his four weddings, missed the fourth only because I was out of the country, and I suppose will go on attending his weddings year after year until death do us part.) He and his bride settled on Manhattan's West Side

in what was then a pleasantly old-fashioned apartment house and which probably by now is a pestilent tenement. I recall dropping in one Saturday morning to find a crater a yard wide in the kitchen wall: Harlan, in preparation for an African safari that never came about because he was drafted into the U.S. Army, had picked up an elephant gun at a bargain price and, proudly waving it about, had blasted open the wall and nearly made himself a widower all in one glorious discharge.

Instead of going to Africa, Harlan went to Fort Dix. I know of no one, except perhaps myself, less capable of accepting the disciplines of the Unites States Army, but Harlan was drafted in 1957 and spent two years in the service, stationed mainly in Kentucky. For most of that time he was to the army like unto a thorn in a lion's paw, a mariner in the belly of a whale, but the bewildered organization found no way of ridding itself of him, nor he of it, and he served a full tour of duty, managing somehow to produce two of his infrequent novels while in uniform.

We lost touch with each other for some years thereafter. He lived briefly in New York, drifted on to Chicago to work as a magazine editor, went from there to Hollywood. We saw each other only at science fiction conventions or on his occasional business trips to New York. He was changing, growing up slowly and reluctantly but steadily, establishing himself as a writer in many fields, building a new life for himself in California. He had always been outspoken, energetic, vociferous, the center of attention in any group, a wonderful stand-up comic, a mimic, a song-and-dance man, but in the early years much of this extraordinary extraversion had been a mask for desperate insecurities, as though he believed that no one would be able to hit him if he were only fast enough and funny enough. During the California years, something new came into him, a sense of confidence, of acceptance of self, of new assurance, so that his hyperkinetic manner and his lunatic humor no longer seem like defenses, but merely his natural mode of communication. He still has his areas of insecurity, sure, but he knows that he has shaped precisely the life he wanted to shape, that in his world he is a star, that when he wakes in the dark hours of the morning and asks himself what he has accomplished he can give himself answers, and not depressing answers.

Harlan is a couple of years past 40 now. He lives on a ridge in the hills overlooking Los Angeles, in a house so crammed with fascinating objects that it is a work of art in itself, and he is a busy man, leaping

from telephone to telephone as he oversees an intricate array of publishing projects, movie deals, lecture dates, and such. We see each other often, for the oddities of destiny have brought me to California too, and though our houses are 400 miles apart, there is more contact between us than there was for some years when we both lived in New York. We are each other's yardstick, in a way, for we have had one another to watch, to study, to wonder at, for a quarter of a century, since late boyhood; and having shared our fantasies of what we wanted our adult lives to be, we know exactly where we have achieved what we dreamed of achieving, and where we have gone beyond what we dared to dream, and where we have fallen short.

I could tell you much more. I could fill this magazine with Harlan stories. (So could anyone who has been around him for long, but I've been around him longer than anyone else.) I could tell you of Harlan and the Chinese waiter, Harlan and the birdbath, Harlan and the Winnemucca whorehouse; I could tell you of the time Harlan slew the nine-foot-tall paratrooper with a single glance, of the time he nearly caused a break in diplomatic relations between the United States and Brazil, of the time he almost provoked a famed New York restaurateur to drown him in a butt of ketchup. But soft: we are observed, and some of these stories ought not to be shared with utter strangers. Another occasion, perhaps, and I'll set them down for your delight.

Enough for now to say that he is a phenomenon, a wonder, and let that sum it up. If there were one more of him on this planet, the continuum itself would not be able to stand the strain of it. But how pale and drab the lives of many of us, myself certainly included, would have been, had there been one Harlan less.

A critical appreciation of the Ellison canon from Richard Delap, who is currently editing a collection of Harlan's stories for Putnam (THE ESSENTIAL HARLAN ELLISON). Mr. Delap is the editor of Delap's F&SF Review, a review journal of fantasy and sf and a most worthwhile publication (from 1126 N. Laurel Ave., West Hollywood, CA 90046).

Harlan Ellison: The Healing Art of Razorblade Fiction

by RICHARD DELAP

Harlan Ellison, in his postscript for Hank Stine's perceptive and too little-known sf novel, *Season of the Witch*, asked a question he himself has been trying to clarify in his own fiction since the beginning of his career:

> "Who will be the first to acknowledge that it was only a membrane, only a vapor, that separated a Robert Burns and his love from a Leopold Sacher-Masoch and his hate?"

Even before Harlan squirmed his way into the world (and I somehow cannot see him yielding to the natural forces of uterine contractions, but instead imagine him examining his surroundings and exclaiming in wonder 'Ah hah! And where does this lead?'), love and hate generally appeared whitewashed and compartmentalized in the field of science fiction and fantasy. Villains were purely villainous, heroes were purely heroic, and women were kewpie doll prizes.

Between the clearly defined judgments of yesterday and the present generation's recognition that many of them were empty, false, basically inhuman determinations, there is a period of growth, maturation, vigorous expansion and exciting discoveries. To other worlds, to other times, science fiction was leading us round and round and round in search of — *just what was it we were searching for?* The answer to that persistent question was clouded in stereotypes, side-stepped through time portals, outdistanced in faster-than-light travels, and swept under the rug in households ruled by aliens of every stripe. (Okay, so sometimes they were polka dot, but they all lived together in the same little coffeepot, the one that writers hold in one hand as they type with the other.)

As the search continued, a new

voice was added to the melee. That voice had been hovering around the fringes of professional science fiction for several years, speaking from the pages of science fiction fanzines, noisy, raucous, desperately disrespectful in its search for an audience. That voice made its way into the professional ranks in 1956, with a story titled "Glowworm" in *Infinity Science Fiction* magazine. The byline read 'by Harlan Ellison,' and James Blish is reported to have called it "the single worst story ever written in the field."

Re-reading the story today, one finds that it isn't really so awful (there are at least three stories which are worse.) Brushing aside the crudities of plot, one discovers that its opening sentence has a brutal directness indicative of the style that would one day fuse the fantasy of science fiction to the reality of the human heart:

> "When the sun sank behind the blasted horizon, its glare blotted out by the twisted wreckage rising obscenely against the hills, Seligman continued to glow."

1956-59 were Harlan's apprentice years. His stories were everywhere, about everything, his later reputation as a gadfly writer merely an acknowledgement of blatant fact. There were stories in the sf magazines — over 40 of them in 1957, some published under pseudonyms, with nearly 20 more the following year — not to mention a number of contributions to various men's magazines, detective story magazines, even a couple of western stories.

Most of these stories are, to use a phrase that is one of Harlan's favorites, down the rabbit hole. Some of them survive in Harlan's story collections, in revised form, and their value is primarily in tracing the growth of the writer and the themes which were to take precedence over the coming years.

They are sometimes clever stories, like the wry and amusing "S.R.O.," in which aliens land on Earth and become a sensation of the entertainment world until the day they decide to take a lunch break ... with the audience as lunch. Some are action-packed adventures, such as "Run for the Stars," "The Assassin," and "Sound of the Scythe." And some are fragile, tentative explorations of psychological material, as in "The Sky Is Burning" and "The Last Day," couched in grim scenes of violence and destruction.

It was soon apparent that violence and horror were the major thrusts of much of Harlan's work. His first novel in 1958, *Rumble*, and his first collection of short stories, *The Deadly Streets*, published that same year, were realistic views of street life among the kid

gangs of New York. As research for these books, as well as for the excellent autobiographical work *Memos from Purgatory* (1961), Harlan had spent over two months with one of those gangs in 1954. If we look at the books closely we find that Harlan writes *about* violence because violence is such a primal outlet for fear and frustration. His stories seldom if ever capitalize on violence merely to feed these fears in readers. Harlan's purpose is more penetrating and more humane, his exposure of hatreds in all their ugliness doubling as a weapon in the battle against them.

In 1959 there was a story that gave lie to the growing misconception that Harlan's *modus operandi* was too exploitative to be of lasting value. "In Lonely Lands" is a beautiful, gentle story of friendship and devotion, the power and strength of love in the face of the vast indifferent expanse of the universe and its many worlds. In this story we find the key to understanding the secret of all that Harlan has ever written: behind the horrors men may find, the terrors he may himself create, and the agonies of his indecision, he carries in equal measure the armament to withstand them and remain whole, strongly resilient, sane. If man loses an individual battle, it is because he has weakened himself with lies and self-deceptions, not because he is inalterably cowardly and worthless.

After the publication of a book of science fiction stories *A Touch of Infinity* (1960) — published as one of the numerous Ace Double novels and backed with *The Man with Nine Lives*, an expanded version of "Sound of the Scythe" — Harlan had two more collections of 'mainstream' short stories, *The Juvies* and *Gentleman Junkie and Other Stories of the Hung-Up Generation*, plus a novel, *Rockabilly* (recently reprinted as *Spider Kiss*). When Hollywood purchased two stories for filming, Harlan left an editing job in Chicago and made the trip to California, hoping to break into the lucrative market of film and television.

It was in 1962 that the late Dorothy Parker reviewed *Gentleman Junkie* in the pages of *Esquire* magazine, and she was the first to speak to a wide audience of readers about the honesty and power in Harlan's writing. A highly respected commentator and critic, Parker and her opinion were not taken lightly and it proved to be the breakthrough Harlan needed.

Hollywood was interested in Harlan's talent but not quite ready for the "Ticktockman" that had been loosed. Never the most perceptive people to settle their backsides over the San Andreas fault, the Hollywood moguls and businessmen had not listened closely to

what Parker had told them when she said "Mr. Ellison is a good, honest, clean writer, putting down what he has seen and known, and no sensationalism about it."

Harlan's talent could hardly be denied, but his honesty, his demands for quality, and his refusal to shoulder blame for the tampering his scripts would sometimes undergo — for which he stubbornly forces the producers to substitute his nefarious pen-name, "Cordwainer Bird," thereby depriving them of the additional publicity value of his well-known name — have made him a ferocious little mongoose in a pit of nervous vipers. Harlan has teeth, knows how to use them, and is not at all reluctant to bite when necessary, which doesn't make him the most popular man in the glamourland where writers are oftened shafted and skewered and taken for granted.

During the early 60s, the majority of Harlan's stories appeared in the men's magazines and the audience for his work grew more diversified. But sf and fantasy readers, while they had to search out his work from wider sources, were becoming ever more hooked by Harlan's striking new ways of looking at old themes. By mid-decade he had published two collections of sf/fantasy, *Ellison Wonderland* and *Paingod and Other Delusions*, the latter including that marvelously sane and witty story, "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman," which bids fair to be one of the most popular and reprinted stories of our time. Harlan Ellison was no longer a promising newcomer. He was a major talent, preparing to take the world of science fiction and elevate it to a prominence it had never known.

The excitement began in 1965 with "Repent, Harlequin!" (a Hugo and Nebula award winner), and it heralded a literary tide of such force that the very foundations of science fiction metamorphosed into a powerful and belligerent new trend: "Demon with a Glass Hand" (*Outer Limits* script, Writers Guild of America award); "Delusion for a Dragon Slayer" (Hugo and Nebula nominee); "Pretty Maggie Moneyeyes" (Hugo and Nebula nominee); "City on the Edge of Forever" (*Star Trek* script, Hugo and Writers Guild of America awards); *Dangerous Visions*, the ground-breaking original anthology with two award-winning stories, plus a "special" award presented by the World SF Convention; "I Have No Mouth, and I Must Scream" (Hugo winner); "The Beast That Shouted Love at the Heart of the World" (Hugo winner); "A Boy and His Dog" (Nebula winner and Hugo nominee, later adapted for a film which received a Hugo award); "Shattered Like a Glass Goblin" (Nebula nominee) "The Region Between" (Hugo and

Nebula nominee); "Brillo" (with Ben Bova; Hugo nominee); "Basilisk" (Hugo and Nebula nominee); "On the Downhill Side" (Nebula nominee); *Again, Dangerous Visions* (a second original anthology containing two *more* award-winning stories), "The Whimper of Whipped Dogs" (Mystery Writers of America 'Edgar' award); "The Deathbird" (Hugo winner and Nebula nominee); "Adrift Just Off the Islets of Langerhans, Latitude 38°54'N, Longitude 77°00'13"W" (Hugo winner); "Phoenix without Ashes" (Writers Guild of America award for Harlan's *original* script, not the twisted wreckage that finally made it to television in the travesty series *The Starlost*); "Shatterday" (Nebula nominee); "Croatoan" (Hugo nominee); and *Harlan! Harlan Ellison Reads Harlan Ellison*, an Alternate Worlds recording that at this writing has placed on the final Nebula ballot in the "Dramatic Presentation" category.

There had *never* been anything like it, inspiring more printed controversy than any author had ever madly dreamed of stimulating. And Harlan has sailed through it all like a master seaman, crashing through the breakers in a white ship of dreams and nightmares, terrors and ecstasies. Just what is it the man does so right?

Harlan's articles and essays — including trenchant and demanding book criticism, excellent record reviews (everything from jazz to the recent rash of sf albums), political/social commentary (much of it included in his books *The Glass Teat* and *The Other Glass Teat*, popular items especially on college campuses), and painfully honest opinion on the necessity of exploring one's self completely and still emerging with self-respect — are as dangerous and inciting as his most controversial fictional work. His stories are solid, concrete things that seldom fuss with insubstantial moods and pretty decorative touches. They are raw, vibrant, alive with emotion that, even in his weakest plots, gorges the reader with such an abundance of feeling that it's much like being glutted with caviar and champagne. Great at first, but soon your system starts short-circuiting in very strange ways.

Some readers are fragile and can't stand it at all. Try giving *Deathbird Stories* to the little old lady in blue jeans and sneakers who buys gothic novels by the hundreds, then watch her curl up fetally and go spasmodic. Or give it to the bluenoses and watch them turn up their noses at what they imagine is some sort of stench — their imaginations are great at conjuring up bad odors but too limited to understand the value of ambergris. Then give it to those who are wide-eyed and eager and see them go star-

tlingly pensive as they plummet the depths of their own consciousness and innocently examine the beauties and horrors they find there.

It is not a slur to call Harlan a thinking man's writer, for all his emotionalism is to that end, telling us to look, to see: all of this is in him, as it is in every one of us, for we are all victims, all heroes, all cut along the same emotional bias no matter what the final pattern.

Harlan has been repeatedly attacked by his detractors as an arrogant man overly fond of curt dismissals, with a lack of gratitude even to those who worship him. Many of these people have never met Harlan Ellison in person, but they have heard stories ...

It is not my place to defend Harlan from such charges. They will continue to be made as long as the man writes, and surely for long after that. As with all modern myths there is an element of truth to the statements. He is short-tempered, hates to be deified and is therefore sometimes ill-mannered — especially with fans who with cannibalistic fervor would rather have a piece of him, either of precious time or literally, than be satisfied with the tremendous amount of himself he gives through his writing — and is much too impulsive for his own good. Harlan loves his success but he is not blind to its inherent dangers, and in the original Preface to his book *Love Ain't Nothing But Sex Misspelled*, he defends himself with what I feel is inarguable honor:

> "One of the *very* few things that sustains a writer through the years of cockroach rooms tiny enough to double for the death cell at Dannemora, the limp dismissals by editors too busy to encourage talent, the good stories that went bad, the bad stories that got bought, the penny-a-word hack writing necessary to keeping the muscles from atrophying, the screaming loneliness locked in silently behind a qwertyuiop machine, is a writer's arrogance. Without it, he is nothing more than a creative typist (as Bernard Wolfe calls Hollywood scriptwriters). Or, blowing out his skull, he retreats to bricklaying or beachcombing. And is infinitely happier. But a lot less arrogant."

Harlan's own life is an ever-visible presence in almost everything he creates. When he fails to cut through his conscious levels to bare the yearnings, the nostalgia, the emotional wellsprings of his loves and hates, the reader can instinctively sense something awry. A number of his early stories suffer from this lack of passion, even when they are decently plotted and written. The protagonists in his stories are not necessarily Harlan himself, but some of the most memorable ones are cut from the cloth of his id, burning with fires that are quenched only by living and breathing on the printed page.

However this may shock some readers who find Harlan's stories censorable, I do not hesitate to say that the writings of Harlan Ellison appeal primarily to young people and those who think young, the ones who are willing to admit they have not calcified their approach to living, who look at themselves and say "Well, here's a part of me, but where's the rest hidden, and what does it look like?"

Harlan's life is like a book. No, Harlan's life *is* a book. No, his life is *many* books!

You shouldn't read them all at once, but sample them one at a time, watch the boy become a man, watch the man split into many men (and women), watch them win over (or lose to) the gods, watch them *become* gods. And when you've finished, you'll never need wonder what the writer behind the story is really like. There he is, growing, changing chameleon-like before your very eyes, looking at you and telling you what he sees, looking at himself and reporting from the inside out. It is a multi-volume autobiography in a new form, an expanded form, chained to reality but repeatedly escaping in flights of fantasy, intermingling the two in all sorts of inventive ways, screaming shouting loving hating exalting suffering: *Look, it's me, it's you, we're all in this together!*

To deny Harlan his say, to forbid him to give you something of himself — which actually is something of yourself, too — is to turn your back on curiosity, love of life, and the concept of change. Science fiction is about change, and Harlan Ellison's science fiction and fantasy, while also about change, is even more concerned with our participatory efforts to *effect* that process. It is, essentially, an ode to life.

Everyone who has read Harlan's stories seems to have a personal favorite, one that speaks to him or her directly, that signifies some inner smoldering that Harlan has fanned into flame. Recently "The Deathbird" seems to have affected many people this way, which is not surprising, coming as it does at a time when so many people are seriously questioning religious beliefs and wondering if there is not perhaps some new way of approaching the standard Christian viewpoint. Harlan's approach, a mind-rattling reversal of roles for God and Satan, was far more than just a clever trick ending, which in the hands of a lesser writer might have been the extent of it. He turned the story into a test of our powers of self-analysis, a baseline gritty assessment of joy and sorrow, right and wrong, good and evil. Again Harlan opened himself up to public view and showed his guts were an emotion-reflecting mirror

by which *we* could see ourselves more clearly.

Of all Harlan's stories, however, I think there is one that will survive as long as there is that mysterious biological attraction that brings the sexes together in spite of every obstacle. "Pretty Maggie Moneyeyes" shows us a man and a woman at the mercy of the modern world where the individual is measured by his power over someone else. Sex, money and ambition become trapdoors to infatuation, greed and treachery, and the highly romantic foreground is a sly prelude to unexpected but intrinsic disaster. Harlan's wit and psychological observation are reminiscent of Arthur Schnitzler's *La Ronde*, although "Pretty Maggie Moneyeyes" never comes full-circle but rather drops off into a Hieronymous Bosch nightmare. It is a story of love and lies, at all their myriad levels, and while it was well received at the time, it hasn't yet gained the recognition it deserves for its complexity and insight and sheer emotional power. With science fiction gathering literary recognition at a tremendous rate in recent years, I persist in believing this story will eventually emerge as one of the truly classic stories of our time.

But Harlan's fiction, good as it often is, is only part of the story.

Science fiction, as daring and thoughtful as it has sometimes been during its years of growth, could never quite shake off the ghetto shadows of its pulp origins and presentation. Even in the early 60s it was still fighting an uphill battle against a reputation for garish cover paintings of women in steel brassieres and tentacled monsters whose sole occupation seemed to be trying to get a peek at what was under those brassieres. Science fiction which seemed to sway toward any serious intention was hustled into the mainstream with due haste — witness *1984, Brave New World, Earth Abides*, etc. — where it was shielded by the literary lions who insisted that it was not sf *because* it was good literature.

The wall was tentatively breeched as the decade marched into history, but it was not until 1967 that Harlan Ellison lined up the science fiction cannons, an anthology of all new stories by the best writers in the field, and blasted the wall all to hell. *Dangerous Visions* did not meet with unanimous acclaim, either in the field of sf or out of it, but it created reverberations that have echoed and re-echoed continuously ever since. Thirty-two aggressive and intelligent writers came out shooting and the tentacled beasties were blasted to bits, the steel brassieres evaporated in an instant.

A second anthology five years later, *Again, Dangerous Visions*,

once more edited with an eye toward grinding taboos into powdered oblivion, featured forty-two writers (many of them new and untested talents) with an arsenal of literary weaponry unlike anything ever seen before. The battle was in full force and the establishment palace was going up in flames. Science fiction became a movement to be reckoned with on every campus from coast to coast, and magazines of even the most conservative bent were publishing criticism that did not shy away from books labeled "science fiction." And the final assault, *The Last Dangerous Visions*, is being blueprinted even as you read these words — and none too soon, for the increasing apathy of the 70s has already become powerful and destructive, as Harlan himself noted in his depressing, voice-crying-in-the-wilderness introduction to *Approaching Oblivion* (1974). The tolerance of hypocrisy, the disregard of innovation and challenge, and the revering of severely dated literary values can and should be doomed as the new movement surges forward bravely (if, sometimes, a bit unsurely) into new territories.

Harlan did not merge the currents of science fiction and the mainstream by himself, and the two streams have not yet, and perhaps never will, combine into one swollen river. There were a number of writers, editors and publishers mingling the creative waters behind the dam, dazzling the general public with the strength of all this new literary wealth and making it clear that this input of fresh water did have a source.

But look closely at those men and women, some with their eyes on the stars, some with their thoughts directed inward to the depths of their hearts and minds. Down there in front is a smart little fellow with a cockeyed look on his face, one eye on the heavens, one on the subconscious. It gives him a wild and scary look, sort of crazy, weird and wonderful. His body is damp with the sweat of honest labor, and that smile on his face is a look of satisfaction that is almost angelic ... in a devilish sort of way.

Don't be fooled, however; he'll trick you. The pen in his shirt pocket doubles as a razorblade, and when he stops to scribble in that black notebook, that isn't red ink dropping off the pages. He's probably up to something dark and dangerous. And he'll drag you along with him, kicking and screaming all the way.

I am sure he's just going after some Band Aids ... though where he's going to find them in that dense dark thicket over yonder is hard to say.

Don't be frightened. Remember, we're all in this together.

HARLAN ELLISON: AN F&SF CHECKLIST

Compiled by Leslie Kay Swigart

This Checklist intends to set out briefly the details of the editions of books by and edited by Harlan Ellison, to note the first publication of all of his published fiction and the first presentations of each of his produced scripts, and to list his recordings. The periodicals and books to which he has contributed nonfiction are listed. His contributions to SF fan magazines and to college publications are not listed, nor are the many reprints of his shorter works.

The Checklist is arranged as follows:

BOOKS BY HARLAN ELLISON

BOOKS EDITED BY HARLAN ELLISON

Information given: Title (Place of publication: Publisher, Date, Pages, Publisher's number, Format, Price, Number of printings if more than one) Type of Book, and, if a collection, the contents. American editions are listed first, followed by the foreign editions in chronological order.

SCRIPTS BY HARLAN ELLISON

Only scripts which have been produced are listed. Arrangement is by title, with the series title and first air date noted for TV series episodes.

RECORDINGS BY HARLAN ELLISON

NONFICTION BY HARLAN ELLISON

Only the titles of the periodicals and books (with editor and publication information) to which he has contributed original nonfiction are given.

SHORT FICTION BY HARLAN ELLISON

Only first publication is noted. For periodical contributions is given: Periodical title, and either month/year or volume and issue numbers and year; for book contributions: Book title, Editor (Place: Publisher, Date). Other titles under which the story has been published are given, as are co-authors and pseudonyms used on the first publication.

Abbreviations. Magazines (where full title is not used): *ABR - Adam Bedside Reader, Adam - Adam Monthly/Magazine, Amz - Amazing, Fan - Fantastic, FU - Fantastic Universe, FSF - Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction, Gal - Galaxy, Guilty - Guilty Detective Story Magazine, Inf - Infinity, Knight - Knight Magazine, The Saint - The Saint Detective/Mystery Magazine* (American edition unless British is specified), *SFA - Science Fiction Adventures , SSF - Super-Science Fiction, Sure-Fire - Sure-Fire Detective Stories, Trapped - Trapped Detective Story Magazine.* Other abbreviations: apa - also published as, Brit - British, Can - Canadian, ed. - edited by, edn - edition, hc - hardcover, NAL - New American Library (publisher), pa - paperback, PE - Pyramid Ellison (Series, published by Pyramid Books), ptg(s) - printing(s), SFBC - Science Fiction Book Club (Doubleday), v. - volume.

BOOKS BY HARLAN ELLISON

Rumble (NY: Pyramid, 1958. 190p. #G352 pa $.35) (NY: Pyramid, 1963. 190p. #F866 pa $.40) (as *Web of the City*. NY: Pyramid, 1975. 185p. #A4060 pa $1.50 PE#10) Novel.

The Deadly Streets (NY:Ace, 1958. 192p. #D-312 pa $.35) (London: Brown Watson, 1959. 156p. Digit #D230 pa 2/-) (NY: Pyramid, 1975. 207 p. #V3931 pa $1.25 PE#8 2 ptgs plus a Can ptg) Collection. Introduction: Some Sketches of the Damned; I'll Bet You a Death; We Take Care of Our Dead; Johnny Slice's Stoolie; Joy Ride; Buy Me That Blade; Kid Killer; With a Knife in Her Hand; Look Me in the Eye, Boy!; The Dead Shot; Made in Heaven; Students of the Assassin. The 1975 edn adds a new introduction: Avoiding Dark Places, and the stories: Rat Hater; The Man with the Golden Tongue; The Hippie-Slayer; Ship-Shape Pay-Off (with R. Silverberg).

The Man with Nine Lives (NY: Ace, 1960. 133p. #D-413 pa $.35. Ace Double with his *A Touch of Infinity*) Novel. Manuscript title: *The Sound of a Scythe*. Abridged version: Sound of the Scythe, *Amz* 10/59; one portion published as: Assassin! *SFA*, 2/57.

A Touch of Infinity (NY: Ace, 1960. 123 p. #D-413 pa $.35 Ace Double with his *The Man with Nine Lives*) Collection. Introduction; Run for the Stars; Back to the Drawing Boards; Life Hutch; The Sky is Burning; Final Trophy; Blind Lightning.

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The Juvies (NY: Ace, 1961. 189p. #D513 pa $.35) Collection. Introduction: Ten Weeks in Hell; No Way Out; Matinee Idyll; No Game for Children; The Rough Boys; A Tiger at Nightfall; School for Killers; Memory of a Muted Trumpet; Stand Still and Die; Gang Girl.

Gentleman Junkie and other stories of the hung-up generation (Evanston, IL: Regency, 1961. 160p. #RB102 pa $.50) (NY: Pyramid, 1975. 255p. #V3933 pa $1.25 PE#7 2 ptgs plus a Can ptg) Collection. Introduction, by Frank M. Robinson; Preface; Final Shtick; Gentleman Junkie; May We Also Speak? (Four Statements of the Hung-Up Generation: 1. Now You're on the Box! 2. The Rocks of Gogroth 3. Payment Returned, Unopened 4. The Truth); Daniel White for the Greater Good; Lady Bug, Lady Bug; Free with This Box!; There's One on Every Campus; At the Mountains of Blindness; This is Jackie Spinning; No Game for Children; The Late, Great Arnie Draper; High Dice; Enter the Fanatic, Stage Center; Someone is Hungrier; Memory of a Muted Trumpet; The Time of the Eye; Sally in Our Alley; The Silence of Infidelity; Have Coolth; RFD #2 (with H. Slesar); No Fourth Commandment; The Night of Delicate Terrors. The 1975 edn replaces the Preface with a new introduction: The Children of Nights, and The Time of the Eye is replaced by Turnpike; some stories have been revised.

Memos from Purgatory: two journeys of our times (Evanston, IL: Regency, 1961. 160p. #RB106 pa $.50) (Reseda, CA: Powell, 1969. 207p. #PP154 pa $.95) (NY: Pyramid, 1975. 204p. #V3706 pa $1.25 PE#3 2 ptgs plus a Can ptg) Autobiography. 1969 edn has a new introduction: Memo 69. 1975 edn adds another new introduction: Memo 75.

Rockabilly (Greenwich, CT: Fawcett, 1961. 176p. Gold Medal #S1161 pa $.35) (London: Frederick Muller, 1963. 176p. Gold Medal #598 pa 2/6, then 4/- 2 (?) ptgs) (as *Spider Kiss*. NY: Pyramid, 1975. 191p. #V3883 pa $1.25 PE#6 2 ptgs plus a Can ptg) Novel.

Ellison Wonderland (NY: Paperback Library, 1962. 191p. #52-149 pa $.50) (as *Earthman, Go Home*. NY: Paperback Library, 1964. 191p. #52-508 pa $.50) (as *Earthman, Go Home*. NY: Paperback Library, 1968. 191p. #53-727 pa $.60) (NY: NAL, 1974. 178p. Signet #Y6041 pa $1.25 2 ptgs Two states exist, one with and one without cigarette advertising) (1962 U.S. edn distributed by: London: Thorpe & Porter, 1963. 191p. #52-149 pa 3/6) (as *Der silberne Korridor*. Munchen: Wilhelm Goldmann, 1973. 181p. #0152 pa DM4,00) (Scarsborough, Ont.: NAL of Canada, 1974. 178p. Signet #Y6041 pa $1.25) Collection. Commuter's Problem; Do-It-Yourself (with J. Hensley); The Silver Corridor; All the Sounds of Fear; Gnomebody; The Sky is Burning; Mealtime; The Very Last Day of a Good Woman; Battlefield; Deal from the Bottom; The Wind beyond the Mountains; The Forces That Crush; Nothing for My Noon Meal; Hadj; Rain, Rain, Go Away; In Lonely Lands. The 1974 edn adds a new introduction: The Man on the Mushroom, revises some of the story introductions, and replaces The Forces That Crush with Back to the Drawing Boards.

Paingod and other delusions (NY: Pyramid, 1965. 157p. #R-1270 pa $.50) (NY: Pyramid, 1969. 157p. #X-1991 pa $.60) (NY: Pyramid, 1975. 176p. #V3646 pa $1.25 PE#2 2 ptgs plus a Can ptg) (NY: Pyramid, 1976. 176p. #A3646 pa $1.50 PE#2) (as *Dolorama e altre delusioni*. Milano: Ponzoni, 1966. 143p. I romanzi del cosmo #192 pa L.200) (as *Ainsi sera-t-il*. Verviers, Belgique: Marabout, 1971. 248p. #381 pa) Collection. Introduction: Spero Meliora: From the Vicinity of Alienation; Paingod; "Repent, Harlequin!" said the Ticktockman; The Crackpots; Bright Eyes*; The Discarded; Wanted in Surgery; Deeper Than the Darkness.* The 1975 edn adds a new introduction: Your Basic Crown of Thorns, revises many story introductions, and adds the story: Sleeping Dogs, Asterisked items omitted from the Italian edn.

I Have No Mouth and I Must Scream (NY: Pyramid, 1967. 175p. #X-1611 pa $.60) (NY: Pyramid, 1972. 175p. #T2638 pa $.75) (NY: Pyramid, 1974. 175p. #N2638 pa $.95) (NY: Pyramid, 1974. 175p. #N3521 pa $.95) (NY: Pyramid, 1975. #N3521 pa $.95) (NY: Pyramid, 1976. 175p. #V3521pa $1.25) (as *Die Puppe Maggie Moneyeyes*. Hamburg: Marion von Schroder, 1972. 184p. pa DM12,00) Collection. Introduction: The Mover and the Shaker, by Theodore Sturgeon; Forward: How Science Fiction Saved Me from a Life of Crime; I Have No Mouth, and I Must Scream; Big Sam Was My Friend; Eyes of Dust; World of the Myth; Lonelyache; Delusion for a Dragon Slayer; Pretty Maggie Moneyeyes.

Doomsman (NY: Belmont, 1967. 159p. #B50-779 pa $.50 Double with *Telepower*, by Lee Hoffman) (NY: Belmont/Tower, 1972. 159p. #BT50244 pa $.75 Double with *The Thief of Thoth*, by Lin Carter) Novel. Manuscript title: *Way of an Assassin*. Originally published as: The Assassin, *Imagination SF*, 10/58.

From the Land of Fear (NY: Belmont, 1967. 176p. #B60-069 pa $.60) (NY: Belmont/Tower, 1973. 176p. #BT50750 pa $.95) (as *Du pays de la peur*. Verviers, Belgique: Marabout, 1973. 252p. #424 pa) Collection. Forward: In Praise of His Spirits Noble and Otherwise, by Roger Zelazny; Introduction: Where the Stray Dreams Go; The Sky is Burning; My Brother Paulie; The Time of the Eye; Life Hutch; Battle Without Banners; Back to the Drawings Boards; A Friend to Man; "We Mourn for Anyone..."; The Voice in the Garden; Soldier; Soldier (TV script).

Love Ain't Nothing But Sex Misspelled (NY: Trident, 1968. 382p. hc $5.95) (NY: Pyramid, 1976. 380p. #M3798 pa $1.75 PE#11 1 ptg plus a Can ptg) Collection. Preface: Motherhood, Apple Pie and the American Way; Pretty Maggie Moneyeyes; The Night of Delicate Terrors; What I Did on My Vacation This Summer, by Little Bobby Hirschhorn, Age 27*; Neither Your Jenny Nor Mine*; Final Shtick; O Ye of Little Faith; Blind Bird, Blind Bird, Go Away from me*; Riding the Dark Train Out*; Delusion for a Dragon Slayer; Daniel White for the Greater Good*; Lonelyache; The Universe of Robert Blake*; Mona at Her Windows*; G. B. K. - A Many-Flavored Bird*; The Face of Helene Bournouw; The Resurgence of Miss Ankle-Strap Wedgie*; Ernest and the Machine God; Battle without Banners*; Punky & the Yale Men*; A Path through the Darkness*; A Prayer for No One's Enemy*; All the Sounds of Fear. The 1976 edn contains the 13 asterisked stories, a new introduction: Having an Affair with a Troll, a new story: I Curse the Lesson and Bless the Knowledge, and two new nonfiction pieces: Valerie, and When I Was a Hired Gun.

The Beast That Shouted Love at the Heart of the World (NY: Avon, 1969. 254p. #V2300 pa $.75) (SFBC edn: NY: Avon, 1969. 245p. hc $1.49) (NY: NAL, 1974. 254p. Signet #Y5870 pa $1.25) (NY: NAL, 1974. 254p. Signet #W7235 pa $1.50) (Japanese edn: Tokyo: Hayakawa, 1973. 357p. #3306 pa =560) (Scarborough, Ont.: NAL of Canada, 1974. 254p. Signet #Y5870 pa $1.25) (London: Millington, 1976. 215p. hc L3.50) Collection. Introduction: The Waves in Rio; The Beast That Shouted Love at the Heart of the World; Along the Scenic Route*; Phoenix; Asleep: With Still Hands; Santa Claus vs S.P.I.D.E.R.; Try a Dull Knife; The Pitll Pawob Division; The Place with No Name*; White on White; Run for the Stars; Are You Listening?; S.R.O.; Worlds to Kill; Shattered like a Glass Goblin*; A Boy and His Dog. The Avon pa edn contains many unauthorized changes. The Brit edn deletes the 3 asterisked stories.

Over the Edge: stories from somewhere else (NY: Belmont, 1970. 191p. #B75-1091 pa $.75 1 ptg plus a Can ptg) (NY: Belmont/Tower, 1972. 191p. #BT50282 pa $.95) Collection. Foreword: The Frontiers of Edgeville, by Norman Spinrad; Introduction: Brinksmanship; Pennies, Off a Dead Man's Eyes; Final Trophy; !!!The!!Teddy!Crazy!!Show!!!; Ernest and the Machine God; Tiny Ally; The Prowler in the City at the Edge of the World; Blind Lightning; 3 Faces of Fear: an essay; Blank; Night Vigil; Enter the Fanatic, Stage Center; Rock God; Afterword: The Back of the Book.

The Glass Teat: essays of opinion on the subject of television (NY: Ace, 1969. 318p. #29350 pa $1.25) (NY: Pyramid, 1975. 319p. #V3701 pa $1.25 PE#1 2 ptgs plus a Can ptg) Essays. With an introduction: 23" Worth of Introduction. The 1975 edn adds a new introduction: The Glass Teat Revisited: A Supplementary Introduction.

Alone Against Tomorrow: stories of alienation in speculative fiction (NY: Macmillan, 1971. 312p. hc $6.95) (SFBC edn: NY: Macmillan, 1971. 277p. hc $1.49) (NY: Collier, 1972. 312p. #01978 pa $1.25 3 ptgs) (2v. Brit edn: as *All the Sounds of Fear.* St. Albans: Panther, 1973. 158p. #03899 pa 30p; as *The Time of The Eye.* St. Albans: Panther, 1974, 156p. #03935 pa 35p) Collection. Introduction: The Song of the Soul; I Have No Mouth, and I Must Scream; The Discarded; Deeper Than the Darkness; Blind Lightning; All the Sounds of Fear; The Silver Corridor; "Repent, Harlequin!" said the Ticktockman; Bright Eyes; Are You Listening?; Try a Dull Knife; In Lonely Lands; Eyes of Dust; Nothing for My Noon Meal; O Ye of Little Faith; The Time of the Eye; Life Hutch; The Very Last Day of a Good Woman; Night Vigil; Lonelyache; Pennies, Off a Dead Man's Eyes. The second volume of the Brit edn contains a new introduction: Introduction, In Brief, and the contents begin with Are You Listening?

Partners in Wonder: Harlan Ellison in collaboration with ... (NY: Walker, 1971. 471p. hc $8.95) (NY: Avon, 1972. 288p. #N416 pa $.95) (NY: Pyramid, 1975. 352p. #A3801 pa $1.50 PE#4 2 ptgs plus a Can ptg) Collection. Introduction: Sons of Janus; I See a Man Sitting on a Chair and the Chair Is Biting His Leg (with R. Sheckley); Brillo (with B. Bova); A Toy for Juliette, by Robert Bloch, and The Prowler in the City at the Edge of the World) Scherzo for Schizoids: Notes on a Collaboration; Up Christopher to Madness (with A. Davidson); Rodney Parrish for Hire (with J. L. Hensley); The Kong Papers (with W. Rotsler); The Human Operators (with A. E. van Vogt); Survivor #1 (with H. Slesar); The Power of the Nail (with S. Delany); Wonderbird (with A. J. Budrys); The Song the Zombie Sang (with R. Silverberg); Street Scene (with K. Laumer); Come to Me Not in Winter's White (with R. Zelazny).

De Helden Van De Highway (Utrecht/Antwerpen: A. W. Bruna, 1973. 192p. Bruna Science Fiction #24 pa f3,75/56F) Original collection. Contains translations of: Mealtime; "We Mourn for Anyone ..."; In Lonely Lands; Pretty Maggie Moneyeyes; Battlefield; Hadj; Along the Scenic Route; The Face of Helen Bournouw; Phoenix; Run for the Stars.

Approaching Oblivion: road signs on the treadmill toward tomorrow (NY: Walker, 1974. 238p. hc $8.95) (SFBC edn: NY: Walker, 1974. 184p. hc $2.49 2 ptgs) (NY: NAL, 1976. 164p. Signet #Y6848 pa $1.25 1 ptg plus a Can ptg) Collection. Foreword: Approaching Ellison, by Michael Crichton;

Introduction: Reaping the Whirlwind; Knox; Cold Friend; Kiss of Fire; Paulie Charmed the Sleeping Woman; I'm Looking for Kadak; Silent in Gehenna; Erotophobia; One Life, Furnished in Early Poverty; Ecoawareness; Catman; Hindsight: 480 Seconds.

Phoenix Without Ashes, by Edward Bryant and Harlan Ellison (Greenwich, CT: Fawcett, 1975. 192p. Gold Medal #3188 pa $.95) Novel. Adapted from Ellison's original script. Also includes an introduction: Somehow, I Don't Think We're In Kansas, Toto.

Deathbird Stories: a pantheon of modern gods (NY: Harper & Row, 1975. 334p. hc $8.95) (NY: Dell, 1976. 346p. #1737 pa $1.75) Collection. Introduction: Oblations at Alien Altars; The Whimper of Whipped Dogs; Along the Scenic Route; On the Downhill Side; O Ye of Little Faith; Neon; Basilisk; Pretty Maggie Moneyeyes; Corpse; Shattered like a Glass Goblin; Delusion for a Dragon Slayer; The Face of Helene Bournouw; Bleeding Stones; At the Mouse Circus; The Place with No Name; Paingod; Ernest and the Machine God; Rock God; Adrift Just Off the Islets of Langerhans: Latitude 38° 54'N, Longitude 77° 00' 13" W; The Deathbird.

The Other Glass Teat: further essays of opinion on television (NY: Pyramid, 1975. 397p. #A3791 pa $1.50 PE#5 2 ptgs plus a Can ptg) Essays. With an introduction: Days of Blood and Sorrow.

No Doors, No Windows (NY: Pyramid, 1975. 223p. #A3799 pa $1.50 PE#9 2 ptgs plus a Can ptg) Collection. Introduction: Blood/Thoughts; The Whimper of Whipped Dogs; Eddie, You're My Friend; Status Quo at Troyden's; Nedra at f:5.6; Opposites Attract; Toe the Line; Down in the Dark; Pride in the Profession; The Children's Hour; White Trash Don't Exist; Thicker Than Blood; Two Inches in Tomorrow's Column; Promises of Laughter; Ormond Always Pays His Bills; The Man on the Juice Wagon; Tired Old Man.

BOOKS EDITED BY HARLAN ELLISON

Dangerous Visions: 33 original stories. Illustrated by Leo and Diane Dillon (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967. 520p. hc $6.95) (SFBC edn: Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967. 544p. hc, number of ptgs unknown) (NY: Berkley, 1969. 3v (220p., 224p., 224p.) #N1686, #N1704, #N1714 pa $.95 each #2: 2 ptgs, #3: 3 Ptgs) (NY: Berkley, 1972. 576p. #D2274 pa $1.50 4 ptgs) (NY: NAL, 1975. 514p. Signet #J6240 pa $1.95 2 ptgs) (as *15 Science Fiction Stories*, and *15 Science Fiction Stories II*. Munchen: Wilhelm Heyne, 1970. 2v. (207p., 220p.) Heyne Anthologien #32, #34 pa) (as *Dangerous Visions I*, and *Dangerous Visions 2*. London: David Bruce & Watson, 1970. 2v. (359p., 293p.; hc L2.25 each) (London: Sphere, 1974. 3v. (243p., 232p., 270p.) #3300 6, #3301 4, #3302 2 pa 50p each) (Scarborough, Ont.: NAL of Canada, 1975. 514p. Signet #J6240 pa $1.95) as *Dangereuses visions, Tome I*, and *Dangereuses visions, Tome II*. Paris: J'ai lu, 1976. 2v. (379p., 380p.) #626, #627 pa) Collection of stories by del Rey, Silverberg, Pohl, Farmer, deFord, Bloch, Ellison, Aldiss, Rodman, Dick, Niven, Leiber, Hensley, Anderson, Bunch, C. Emshwiller, Knight, Sturgeon, Eisenberg, Slesar, Dorman, Sladek, Brand, Neville, Lafferty, Ballard, Brunner, Laumer, Spinrad, Zelazny, and Delany, with two forewords by Asimov and an introduction: Thirty-Two Soothsayers. Each story has an introduction by the editor and an afterword by the author, and an illustration by the Dillons. The German edn omits all forewards, introductions, afterwords, illustrations, and stories by Farmer, Bunch, and Emshwiller. Volumes 2 and 3 of the Berkley and Sphere edns each have a new Introduction. The 3 v. Berkley edn was also issued as a boxed set. The NAL edn was also issued in an NAL gift pack with the 2v. *Again, Dangerous Visions*.

Nightshade and Damnations, by Gerald Kersh (Greenwich, CT: Fawcett, 1968. 192p. Gold Medal #R1887 pa $.60) (London: Hodder Fawcett, 1969. 192p. Coronet #0839 pa 5/-) Collection of 11 stories by Kersh which was edited by Ellison and to which he contributed an introduction: Kersh, The Demon Prince.

Again, Dangerous Visions: 46 original stories. Illustrated by Ed Emshwiller (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1972. 760p. hc $12.95 2 ptgs) (SFBC edn: Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1972. 830p. hc $4.50 5 ptgs) (NY: NAL, 1973. 2v. (450., 449p.) Signet #J5672, #J5673 pa $1.95 each 3 ptgs each) (London: Millington, 1976. hc L6.00) Collection of stories by Heidenry, Rocklynne, LeGuin, offutt, G. Wolfe, Nelson, Bradbury, Oliver, Bryant, Wilhelm, Hemesath, Russ, Vonnegut, Sherred, O'Donnell, Hollis, B. Wolfe, Gerrold, Anthony, Hoffman, Wilson, Bernott, Benford, Lief, Sallis, Saxton, McCullough, Kerr, Filer, Hill, Tushnet, Bova, Koontz, Blish, Parra (y Figueredo), Disch, Lupoff, M. J. Harrison, Scott, Weiner, T. Carr, and Tiptree, and an introduction: An Assault of New Dreamers. Each story has an introduction by the editor, an afterword by the author, and an illustration by Emshwiller. The 2v. NAL edn is also issued in an NAL gift pack with *Dangerous Visions*.

SCRIPTS BY HARLAN ELLISON

The City on the Edge of Forever. *Star Trek* (6 April 1967) Writers Guild of America Award for Most

Outstanding Script (Dramatic-Episodic) of 1967/68 season (for original script); Original script published in *Six Science Fiction Plays*, ed. R. Elwood (NY: Washington Square Press, 1976)

Demon with a Glass Hand. *Outer Limits* (17 October 64) Writers Guild of America Award for Outstanding Script (Television Anthology) of 1964/65 season

A Gift for a Warrior. Teleplay by Larry Marcus. *Route 66* (18 January 1963) Based on Ellison's No Fourth Commandment.

Knife in the Darkness. *Cimarron Strip* (25 January 1968)

Memo from Purgatory. *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* (21 December 1964) Based on *Memos from Purgatory*

The Oscar (with R. Rouse and C. Green). Paramount (4 March 1966)

Phoenix without Ashes, as Cordwainer Bird. *The Starlost* (22 September 1973) Original script received Writers Guild of America Award for Best Dramatic Episodic Script of 1973/74 season; original script published in *Faster Than Light*, ed. J. Dann and G. Zebrowski (NY: Harper & Row, 1976)

The Pieces of Fate Affair. *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* (24 February 1967)

The Price of Doom, as Cordwainer Bird. *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* (12 October 1964) Based on Mealtime

Soldier. *Outer Limits* (19 September 1964) Based on Soldier

The Sort of Do-It-Yourself Dreadful Affair. *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* (23 September 1966)

The Special Dreamers. Public Broadcasting System (30 October 1971)

Where Do Elephants Go To Die? *Ripcord* (29 January 1963)

The Whimper of Whipped Dogs *The Young Lawyers* (10 March 1971)

Who Killed Alex Debbs? *Burke's Law* (25 October 1963)

Who Killed Andy Zygmunt? *Burke's Law* (13 March 1964)

Who Killed ½ of Glory Lee? *Burke's Law* (8 May 1964)

Who Killed Purity Mather? *Burke's Law* (6 December 1963)

You Can't Get There from Here, as Cordwainer Bird. *The Flying Nun* (11 April 1968)

RECORDINGS BY HARLAN ELLISON

Harlan! Harlan Ellison Reads Harlan Ellison. NY: Alternate World Recordings, 1976. AWR 6922

Blood! The Life and Future Times of Jack the Ripper; read by Robert Bloch and Harlan Ellison. NY: Alternate World Recordings, 1977. AWR 6925

NONFICTION BY HARLAN ELLISON

Harlan Ellison has contributed numerous articles, essays, columns, introductions, afterwords, reviews, letters, and interviews to the following periodicals: *Adam Bedside Reader, Adam, American Film Institiute Report, Analog, Battle Cry, Blue and Gold* (Eash High School, Cleveland, Ohio), *Cad, Cinema, Cleveland News, Colloquy, Conan the Barbarian, Confidential, Crawdaddy, Crazy, Delap's F&SF Review, Detective Comics, Esquire, Exposed, Eye, FM and Fine Arts, Fantastic, The Forever People, Foundation, Galaxie, Genesis, If, Ingenue, Inside the Turret, JG: Jazz Guide, Knight, L.A. Free Press, L.A. Image, Los Angeles Magazine, L.A. Times, Lowdown, The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction, Male Life, Man's Way, Men's Delight, Moneysworth, Mystery Monthly, New Times, Nueva Dimension, Other Worlds SF, Oui, Pix, Publishers Weekly, Rage, Rogue, Rugged, Saint Louis Literary Supplement, Savage Sword of Conan, SF Adventures,* the *Bulletin* and the *Forum* of the SF Writers of America, *Show, The Staff* (L.A.), *Sundial* (Ohio State University), *Swamp Thing, Swank, TV Guide, Take One, The Third Degree* (Mystery Writers of America), *33 Guide, Tonight, Topper, Vertex, The Village Voice, Writer's Digest, Writer's Digest School Forum, Writers Guild of America, West, Newsletter,* and *Writer's Yearbook*; and to the following books, ommitting those listed above to which he also contributed original fiction: *All in Color for a Dime*, ed. R. Lupoff and D. Thompson (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington, 1970), *Anthology of Slow Death*, ed. B. R. Turner (SF?: Wingbow Press, 1975), *Autumn Angels*, by A. B. Cover (NY: Pyramid, 1975), *Best Stories from Orbit, Volumes 1 to 10*, ed. D. Knight (NY: Berkley, 1975), *Clarion, Clarion II*, and *Clarion III*, ed. R. S. Wilson (NY: NAL, 1971, 1972, 1973), *Cooking Out of This World*, ed. A. McCaffrey (NY: Ballantine, 1973), *The Craft of Science Fiction*, ed. R. Bretnor (NY: Harper & Row, 1976), *Lone Star Universe*, ed. G. Proctor and S. Utley (Austen: Heidelberg, 1976), *Men on the Moon*, ed. D. A Wollheim (NY: Ace, 1969), *A Mixed Bag*, ed. A. Casty. 2d edn. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1975), *Nebula Award Stories Four*, ed. P. Anderson (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1969), *Nine by Laumer*, by K. Laumer (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967), *A Pocketful of Stars*, ed. D. Knight (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971), *Ravished*, by R. Geis (No. Hollywood, CA: Essex House, 1968), *SF: Author's Choice 4*, ed. H. Harrison (NY: Putnam, 1971), *SF Symposium/FC Simposio*, ed. J. Sanz (Rio de Janiero: Instituto Nacional do Cinema, 1969), *Season of the Witch*, by Hank Stine (No. Hollywood, CA:

Essex House, 1968), *Science Fiction: The Academic Awakening*, ed. W. E. McNelly (Shreveport: College English Association, 1974), *Stella Nova*, ed. by R. Reginald (LA: Unicorn, 1970), *Stormtrack*, by J. Sutherland (NY: Pyramid, 1974), *Those Who Can*, ed. R. S. Wilson (NY: NAL, 1973), and *The Tour*, by M. Perkins (No. Hollywood, CA: Essex House, 1969); and to countless SF fanzines and college magazines and newspapers.

SHORT FICTION BY HARLAN ELLISON

The Abnormals. *Fan* 4/59 (apa: The Discarded)
Across the Silent Days. *See* The Island of Tyooah
Adrift Just Off the Islets of Langerhans: Latitude 38° 54'N, Longitude 77° 00' 13'W. *FSF* 10/74
Again, the Cat Prowls, as Jay Solo. *ABR* 10/67
All the Sounds of Fear. *The Saint* (Brit edn) 7/62
Alive and Well and on a Friendless Voyage. *FSF* 7/77
Along the Scenic Route. *See* Dogfight on 101
Are You Listening? *Amz* 12/58 (apa: The Forces That Crush)
Asleep: With Still Hands. *See* The Sleeper with Still Hands
Assassin! *SFA* 2/57 (Part of *The Man with Nine Lives*)
The Assassin. *Imagination* SF 10/58 (Book title: *Doomsman*)
At the Mountains of Blindness. *The Saint* (Brit edn) 3/61
At the Mouse Circus. *New Dimensions I*, ed. R. Silverberg (NY: Doubleday, 1971)
Back to the Drawing Boards. *FU* 8/58
Backlash! *Sure-Fire* 4/57
Basilisk. *FSF* 8/72
Battle without Banners. *Taboo* (Chicago: New Classics House, 1964)
Battlefield. *See* His First Day at War
Bayou Sex Cat. *See* A Blue Note for Bayou Betty
The Beast That Shouted Love. *Gal* 6/68 (apa: The Beast That Shouted Love at the Heart of the World) 1968 Hugo for Best Short Story
The Big Needle, as Jay Solo. *Nightcap* v. 2 #4, 1963 (apa: Mac's Girl)
The Big Rumble, as Ellis Hart. *Trapped* 8/56 (apa: Made in Heaven)
Big Sam Was My Friend. *SFA* 3/58
The Big Trance. *Dream World* 8/57
Black Money. *See* Too Anxious to Murder
Blank ... *Inf* 6/57
Bleeding Stones. *Vertex* 4/73
Blind Bird, Blind Bird, Go Away from Me! *Knight* 7/63
Blind Date. *Guilty* 3/57
Blind Lightning. *FU* 6/56
Blood by Transit. *SSF* 10/58
A Blue Note for Bayou Betty, as Derry Tiger. *Mermaid* v. 1 #6, 1958 (apa: Bayou Sex Cat; A Blue Note for Bayou Sex Cat)
The Bohemia of Arthur Archer. *The Dude* 1/57 (apa: Bohemia for Christie)
Boss of the Big House! *Sure-Fire* 8/57
Both Ends of the Candle. *The Dude* 11/56
The Boulevard of Broken Dreams. *The Los Angeles Review*, 1975.
A Boy and His Dog. *New Worlds* 4/69 1969 Nebula for Best Novella
Breaking & Entering Pandora's Box. *Crazy* 10/73
Bright Eyes. *Fan* 4/65
Brillo (with B. Bova). *Analog* 8/70
A Bucketful of Diamonds. *Dream World* 2/57
Burn My Killers. *Trapped* 2/57
But Who Wilts the Lettuce? as Ellis Hart. *Amz* 9/56
Buy Me That Knife! as Ellis Hart. *Sure-Fire* 12/57 (apa: Buy Me That Blade)
A Case of Ptomaine. *Space Travel* 9/58 (apa: Mealtime)
Catman. *Final Stage*, ed. E. L. Ferman & B. N. Malzberg (NY: Charterhouse, 1974)
The Cave of Miracles. *Fan* 9/57
Children of Chaos, as Ivar Jorgensen. *Amz* 11/57
Children's Hour, as Wallace Edmondson. *FU* 7/58
Clobber Me, Moogoo. *See* The Mating of MooGoo.
Cold Friend. *Gal* 10/73
Coloring Book for Rogues. *Rogue* 6/60
Come to Me Not in Winter's White (with R. Zelazny). *FSF* 10/69
Commuter's Problem. *FU* 6/57
Conversation Pieces. *Caper* 3/57
Corpse. *FSF* 1/72
A Corpse Can Hate. *Saturn Web Detective Story Magazine* 9/61 (apa: A Tiger at Nightfall)
The Crackpots. *If* 6/56
Creature from Space. *SSF* 12/58
Croatoan. *FSF* 5/75
Damn the Metal Moon, as Ellis Hart. *Fan* 9/57
Daniel White for the Greater Good. *Rogue* 3/61
Dead Shot. *Trapped* 4/57
Dead Wives Don't Cheat, as John Magnus. *Crime and Justice Detective Story Magazine* 3/57
Deal from the Bottom. *Rogue* 1/60
Death Climb. *True Men Stories* 2/57
The Deathbird. *FSF* 3/73 (For original version *See* Snake in the Crypt) 1973 Hugo for Best Novelette; 1973 Jupiter Award for Best Novelette
Deeper Than the Darkness. *Inf* 4/57
Delusion for a Dragon Slayer. *Knight* 9/66
The Destroyers. *See* A Path through the Darkness
The Discarded. *See* The Abnormals
Do-It-Yourself (with J. L. Hensley). *Rogue* 2/61
Doctor D'arqueAngel. *Viva* 1/77
Dogfight on 101. *Adam* 8/69 (apa: Along the Scenic Route)
Don't Mind the Maid. *Guilty* 7/57

Down in the Dark, as Ellis Hart. *ABR* 8/67
Drive a Girl to Kill. *See* You Are Evil!
Dunderbird (with K. Laumer). *Gal* 1/69 (apa: Street Scene)
Ecoawareness. *Sideshow* (Venice, CA) 9/74
Eggsucker. *Ariel* #2, 1977
Emissary from Hamelin. *2076: The American Tricentennial*, ed. E. Bryant (NY: Pyramid, 1977)
The End of the Time of Leinard. *Famous Western* 4/58 (apa: The End of the Time of Frank Leinard)
Enter the Fanatic: Stage Center. *Adam* 7/66
An Episode of Sunbathers. *See* The Pied Piper of Love
Ernest and the Machine God. *Knight* 1/68
Erotophobia. *Penthouse* 8/71
Escape Route, as Lee Archer. *Amz* 3/57
Eyes of Dust. *Rogue* 12/59
F & SF Competition: Report on Competition 4 [entry]. *FSF* 4/73
The Face of Helene Bournouw. *Collage* 10-11/60
Farewell to Glory, as Ellis Hart. *Amz* 10/57
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BAIRD SEARLES
Films

.2001

And now for something completely different ...

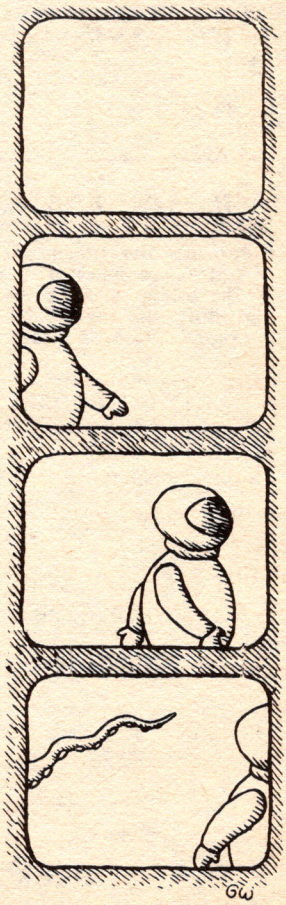
This will, in fact, be a short essay on something I did *not* see and the ramifications therefrom.

To explain! I am an avid movie-on-TV watcher. To those latter day snobs who still hold out for seeing a film in the place for which it was intended, i.e. a theater, and who make noises about commercials, I can only say that the size of a screen is a purely relative matter, and that one can adapt a sort of rhythm that effectively screens out the intrusive commercial.

Despite all this, and the fact that it is one of my favorite films of all time, I adamantly refused to watch *2001: A Space Odyssey* in its television debut. It is one of the rare films whose visual and aural splendors can in no way survive smallness of screen and lowness of fidelity, and whose incredibly long-lined rhythms can in no way be broken into the short enough segments required by commercial TV.

But a great film is a great film no matter what. Right? Wrong. Stravinsky's *Petrouchka* is a great piece of music, but I wouldn't want to hear it on a transistor radio's tiny speaker.

Nevertheless, wanting my cake and to eat it, too, I'm taking the



excuse of the movie's TV debut to talk a bit about it; this column began just a short time after the film appeared, and it has never been discussed here.

Not that there's that much to say, considering all that's been written about the film. But there's one unhappy fact come to my attention in the nearly nine years since it appeared. In that period a great many young people have, one might say, come of age. They have grown up, not just with the knowledge of the film, but subjected to all the rip-offs and commercial influences of *2001*. I mean such things as English muffins and headache remedies coming over the horizon to the strains of Strauss, disco arrangements of the *Zarathustra* theme, and the visual logos for some network's weekly prime time movie slot.

Subjected to this, there is no way in the world to tell the younger generation just what a mind blower the film was the first time around. But, distasteful as these things are to those who love the film, it is proof that *2001* left an indelible mark on the visual style of our time.

I'd like to indulge also in a bit of self-aggrandizing nostalgia. When *2001* first opened in New York, there were, in the first week, only two favorable reviews: *The New Yorker's* and mine on a local radio station.

Variety, for reasons of their own, chose to headline my review and feature one sentence, which was, in effect (it's been a long time, so I don't know if I'm quoting myself accurately) "*2001* may be the ultimate film."

So far as I know, this was the first time the world "ultimate" was used in connection with *2001*; the MGM ad writers gleefully picked it up, applied it to *trip* (it was the height of the "drug culture" years), and an immortal advertising phrase was coined.

I could also go into the war the film raised among s/f people. It very neatly divided the old guard from the new, and the division was noisily acrimonious. I myself saw it for the second time at its New York premiere with Chip Delany and Sandra Ley, and then spent the rest of the night at Judy Merril's discussing it (she had been to a press screening the day before, where I had first seen it). It was Judy who pointed out one of the many extraordinary facts about *2001*; that there was no dialogue for about the first half hour, unheard of (literally) for any movie since the silents.

And I might also indulge myself further in this orgy of reminiscence by adding that I have seen twice, because of the screening and premiere viewings, the famous lost 19 minutes of *2001* which Kubrick,

(*continued on p. 109*)

In which Mr. Wellen updates the basic kidnapping story, and in the nick of time . . .

Ransom

by EDWARD WELLEN

First the finger, then the ear, then the nose.

But before them, the tape. The tape came in the mail that caught up with the traveling mansion of Peter Kifeson. The tape showed a trembling Junior Kifeson in a limbo shot — no background visible, no furnishings. A two-shot, with the light on Junior and the masked man holding him at blaserpoint, and darkness all around them. You had the sense, however, that this scene took place in a small room.

Old Peter Kifeson watched, listened, and chuckled. Twenty-five million credits, indeed. But at least and at last Junior was thinking big, showing drive. About time. After all, Junior must be all of sixty.

Of course, this was only a hoax. It was Junior's way of trying to get his hands on some of the old man's wealth if not on the old man's power. Couldn't wait any longer for the old man to die and leave behind his three-billion-credit conglomerate empire. Junior would have a long long wait; the old man had no intention of dying.

The old man had his robutler loop the tape and the take rolled around again from the top. The masked man, wearing a voice-changer and a form-shimmerer, again demanded a ransom of 25 million credits. And again Junior cried out his fear.

"Do what he says, father. He means business."

And again the old man chuckled. He actually applauded Junior's performance. He never would have thought Junior to have had it in him. Then he cut his hand through the air.

"Enough."

The robutler switched the tape viewer off.

The old man was tired. Too much excitement. He had his chair roll him to his favorite corner of the

room where it tilted him for a nap. The old man had a huddled hearthlorn look, as though he warmed himself at himself. The wonder, when you eyed him now, was that he had ever begot child of woman.

In sleep his features only tightened and his body twitched and jerked. The chair, sensing this, loosed a minty scent and brought into play soothing sound and comforting touch so that the old man might dream pleasant dreams.

He wakened refreshed and ready to deal with the hoax. He would teach Junior a lesson. In the tape the masked man had warned the old man not to call in the police or make public the kidnapping. It would leak to the press anyway; Junior was not too dumb to use the weight of public opinion as leverage. He should know his father better!

The old man spoke into his comsec. "Tell the police." But not everything; he would keep his conviction of Junior's complicity to himself. "And tell the press about it and that I'm not paying one credit ransom. Once blackmail starts, it never ends. I'm refusing as a matter of principle."

The media got the message. The headlines and newscasts both pleased and displeased the old man. He both liked and disliked his notoriety — the penalty of greatness — and Junior was the cause of this latest public stare. What a talking-to he would give the boy when the boy abandoned this nonsense and sheepishly hopped aboard home!

Then one day later the finger came.

It came packed in plastic foam in a neat parcel. The parcel passed through all the old man's scanning devices, then the robutler opened it by remote control. Someone's left forefinger. Left, because of the slant of the folds on the palm side of the finger. Forefinger, because of the calluses only a vibradrum-player acquired. Beyond any doubt, Junior's left forefinger. Junior played the vibradrum and the police computer established that the finger matched the unique pattern of the fingerprint in the worldfile.

The old man frowned. Junior was behaving foolishly. This was going too far. But if Junior and the world didn't know Peter Kifeson by now they would quickly learn how deep his rockhard stubbornness went.

He did not stop to think of asking advice of person or computer. He had long since lost all confidence in confidants. Either they told him what he wanted to hear, when the truth went the other way and could hurt him, or they told him what he didn't want to

hear, that however loudly money talked it couldn't drown out the din of life, that he remained at the mercy of doubts, appetites, impulses, prejudices, habits, unconscious compulsions, and conditioned reflex.

Again he saw to it that the media got hold of the news. The media played it up, showing the finger in its nest, in fullcolor hologram. They quoted the old man. "I will never give in. It's a matter of principle."

But even those papers and stations he owned dared to question his hardness. A poll of viewers voting at their tv sets showed that people, worldwide, by more than three to one, believed Peter Kifeson should pay the ransom; 69 percent were for paying, 22 percent were against, 9 percent were undecided or not responding.

Then the ear came.

By all tests — medical records, photo intelligence, what have you — it was Junior's left ear.

At this point the old man began to be not so sure it was a hoax.

But he had committed himself. So once more he said he would not pay ransom.

The second poll showed 73 percent for paying, 21 percent against, 6 percent no opinion.

The old man scorned the poll. This was his own affair, not the world's. Besides, the finger and the ear posed no severe problem. He believed — and ran a check and found it a fact — that one of his companies manufactured prosthetics, so he could fit Junior out with replacements at cost.

But then the nose came, and with it the final warning. Junior would die if the ransom was not forthcoming.

The nose proved out Junior's nose. As with the finger and the ear, a laser had neatly sliced it off. The nose made the biggest news yet. The third poll showed 82 percent for paying, 11 percent against, 7 percent no opinion.

Peter Kifeson stood fast. What would it profit the kidnapper if he cut Junior off from life to spite the father? The old man told himself the kidnapper would not go through with his threat. And he told the world he would not pay the ransom.

But to lessen the pressure on himself he patched into his legal program and slapped an injunction on the news media forbidding the holding or at the very least the publicizing of a poll, on the grounds of undue invasion of privacy, of coercion by public opinion; anything to stall the poll till after the fact.

Meanwhile, raging as much, having regard to his heart, as he dared, he pulled strings. "What are the police doing?"

The police were doing all they humanly or computerly could. It took a lot of narrowing, but they had gone through the list of Peter Kifeson's enemies and narrowed it down. One man had been missing from his home and haunts during this time.

They called the old man right after the shootout; he had a right to be the first to know the outcome. The kidnapper was a man Peter Kifeson had ruined in a takeover.

The old man waved that away. "How's Junior? Did you find him?"

"We found him, but." They had located the hideout but had moved too slowly or too clumsily. When they finally burned their way in they found the kidnapper had carried out his threat to kill Junior.

The kidnapper would pay for it of course. They had him in custody if the old man wanted to see him.

What for?

The old man waved that away. He waved them all away. He wanted to be alone.

He found himself too alone. With all his wealth and power, couldn't he do something to bring Junior back alive and whole? The long days moved slowly into the long past, with the long future and endless desert to cross. Then he saw an oasis ahead. Or was it only a mirage?

He had taken bids on cloning and given out the contract. Junior's finger had furnished the necessary scraping. The rest of the finger, the ear, and the nose remained in deep freeze against the need for more scrapings. But it looked as if this scraping had taken and there would be no need for more.

The robutler brought him the crib. The old man looked down at the new Junior. Waste not, want not. The new Junior lay nested in the old Junior's crib that the old man had stored in the luggage compartment all these years.

The baby cried. The robutler started to rock the crib. The old man stopped the robutler. The old man would not make the same mistakes he had made in the rearing of the old Junior. He had learned, and the new Junior would learn from him, that softness did not pay.

But at sight and sound of the baby the old man's eyes filled. His heart swelled with love. Say what they might about him, he partook of common humanity, he had the feelings of even the meanest of men.

Bruce McAllister contributed regularly to F&SF in the late 1960's and early 70's ("Prime Time Teaser," "Benji's Pencil," "Ecce Femina"). His new story takes an sf cliche and pushes it a little further, into something quite fresh and moving.

Victor

by BRUCE MC ALLISTER

I am standing on a hill now with Jane. I am wearing baggy khaki pants and a Hawaiian sports shirt with orange hibiscus and a big collar. I have a crewcut, but it's too long because I haven't had it cut in weeks. Jane is wearing a kelly-green pleated skirt, and her hair is in a ponytail (she looks five years younger with it), and the ponytail is drooping a little from the dust and dirt. A minute ago I caught myself whistling a jazzy version of Eddie Fisher's *Any Time* and stopped myself.

It's over now. We've won. We're standing on this hill looking down into the valley at the carcasses of the big alien worms ("nudibranches," the Professor calls them) which we've finally beaten. Our "weapon" — or rather, the professor's — worked. The invasion from another world has failed ....

They came from the "intergalactic void," of course. Professor Stapledon, Jane's father, figured it out in the nick of time and saved us. What they looked like in outer space we don't know. But they were different out there. They'd been traveling through the cold void of space for thousands of years, and when they neared Earth, our planet's gravity field woke them. So they were ready when they hit Earth's atmosphere. The did not burn up from friction. They quickly began spinning "chitinous" cocoons, using the little bits of "atmospheric molecules" and their own alien bodies. The cocoons were hard, hard enough that the atmosphere didn't burn through and hard enough that the worms were "cushioned" when they hit Earth.

It was touch and go for quite a while, and at one point it appeared that they would win. They landed at night, left their cocoons, and began feeding on the "crude fiber" of our city dump. Because it was

night, they grew slowly, but an accident showed us what would happen when the dawn came. Some idiot shined a searchlight from the Frontage Theatre on one of the worms, and feeding on the bright light and dump trash, it enlarged in what the Professor calls a "geometric growth," and then it broke apart into smaller worms that looked like ordinary earthworms. (The Professor called this "imitation." In other words, the alien worms hoped to survive on our planet by "imitating" one of our lifeforms.) The little worms could burrow like lightning, and according to the Professor's calculations, by eating rock and trash and sunlight they would be as large as the "parent" worms in two or three days. Fortunately we were able to capture all of those first little worms, but we knew we wouldn't be able to contain all of them when daylight arrived and our sun's rays fell on the dozens of giant worms that were browsing now on the city dump like cattle. There would be simply too many "infant" worms.

We saw no solution, and the clock ticked on. We didn't even know how to kill the little worms we'd just captured (we were keeping them in jars of "formaldehyde" in a dark closet for the time being). The Professor pointed out that we couldn't use bullets — because they would just eat the bullets. And if we tried to smash them, there would be "seminal fragments" (pieces of the little worms), and these "fragments" would grow, and we'd never find all of them anyway. The Professor also said (and this is what made the situation look completely hopeless) that we couldn't bomb the big ones with TNT or nitro or an A-bomb because they'd just "feed" on the energy and "multiply" even more quickly.

The National Guard was called, and the highway patrol. So was the Pentagon. Everyone wanted to use bombs, and the Professor had to fight hard to keep that from happening. He must have explained the situation to a hundred different people, all of them wanting to use bombs. Other countries — and, of course, our Supreme Commander — were notified too, and no one had an answer. Was this the end of the human species?

Mere hours were left before dawn. The worms were feeding quietly, waiting for the sun to rise.

It was then that the Professor produced his first invention. It was a special insecticide — like DDT, but different — and it combined an ingredient normally used against tapeworms and garden snails, and another ingredient often used to kill tomato worms (which are the "larvas" of the monarch butterfly, he explained).

The spray didn't work.

The Professor got to work on another invention, and Jane and I waited patiently at the newspaper office for a phone call from him. The minutes flew by. No call. And then finally:

The phone rang. It was the Professor, and he wanted us to rush over to his lab immediately.

When we reached the lab, an ugly surprise awaited us. In his excitement the Professor had tripped on a piece of equipment and had hit his head. In fact, he was falling into a coma as we arrived. But before he went unconscious, he looked up at Jane — who was holding him in her arms:

"*The whistle*," he croaked.

Now it was up to me and Jane. "The whistle?" we asked ourselves. We had no idea what he meant. I certainly wasn't a scientist, and Jane had never really paid close attention to her father's experiments (even though she loved him dearly, and she was the only family he had left).

We looked and looked. The whistle? What whistle?

Finally, when there were only a few minutes left before dawn, we found it. The whistle. The Professor had wrapped it up in a sock in a drawer. It was a special hunting whistle he'd devised and tried to patent when he was only an Assistant Professor.

We set up loudspeakers and also a relay to a radio station that was connected with other loudspeakers.

Then we stood in the middle of the dump and blew on it as hard as we could. When I was out of breath, Jane took a turn — and vice versa.

And it began to happen, just like the Professor had calculated.

The birds began coming.

Hundreds of thousands of them, and a thousand different species. They settled down around us, and in the first hint of dawn they spotted the big worms.

Wild from the instinctual craving that birds have for worms, they ignored the size of the creatures and began their work. The invaders tried to fight back — by "growing" and "dividing" — but there were simply too many birds.

The Professor's whistle had worked. A simple little device like that — remembered at the last minute — and the entire human species had been saved. We should never underestimate science and technology (mankind's achievements, and his hope and salvation), nor the courage and resourcefulness of individual men and women, like Jane and myself.

The Professor has come out of his coma now, and all the newspapermen are interviewing him about the whistle.

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Jane and I are being interviewed, too, since we're the ones who blew the whistle.

Jane and I have decided to get married. We've announced our engagement to the same newsmen and hope that they'll mention it in their articles.

The sun is beginning to set, and the sunset is beautiful. But it's actually a dawn, Jane says. Just like my little Jane to say that. She's always right.

The newsmen don't come anymore. Up until a few weeks ago people from *Life*, *Look* and the *Post* were still coming, but they've stopped now. So many photos have been taken of the bony platelike remains of the alien worms that no one's interested anymore. Most of the remains have been stolen or taken away by museums. The city sold them to the museums and is planning to use the proceeds for a couple of long-overdue projects — one involving the dump.

Someone came a month ago and was talking about doing a book about me. They're the same people who did books on Stevenson and those four ransomed fliers that were shot down over Hungary awhile back. A week later I got a call from the guy in New York, and he said the book would have to be about both of us, Jane and me. And then a week after that some other fellow called from the same publisher to say that the articles in *Life* had covered us too thoroughly and that interest in us nationally had started to die anyway.

Today Jane went shopping with Martha (Christmas is only a month away), and I went to the hill, to look down at the few remaining worm bones on the dump. It was strange standing on that hill. It was so quiet. I think I'm wearing the same khaki pants and the same saddle shoes I was wearing the day it all happened. I started to whistle, but it felt silly, and so I stopped.

When I woke up this morning, I did it without waking Jane. I looked over at her, and she didn't look the same. Her hair was in curlers, and she looked heavier. I know it didn't happen overnight. But this morning was the first time I'd noticed it.

We've put the Professor in a convalescent home outside of Pomona. The doctors don't think it had anything to do with his accident that day in the lab. That was too long ago to be affecting him this way now.

I drink a lot of Pabst Blue Ribbon these days, and I don't remember when I first switched brands. I also watch a lot of television. I like *Face the Nation* and *Omnibus*, I suppose (Jane tells me I should), but I also get a kick

out of *Captain Video, Dragnet* and *Mr. I-Magination.* And *77 Sunset Strip* (it's the "ginchiest"!). Jane hates them. I work at the big molds factory in Covina, and one of the things we make — the most famous anyhow — is cast molds for hula hoops. We make molds for other things, too — like teethers and the plastic objects you can hang from your rearview mirrors.

Jane's pregnant, and she smokes a lot now. Before these Toni's she sets her hair with these days, she wore her hair so that it looked like a yellow poodle, and she wears very red lipstick — which looks like someone slugged her. I've told her a hundred times I don't like either the hair or the lips that way, but it doesn't faze her. I wish she'd start wearing a ponytail again.

Right after Peter woke us up this morning (his teeth were killing him, Jane tells me), she and I started arguing. She says our life bores the hell out of her. I told her that if it's boring, it's because she doesn't know what to do with herself during the day — a baby doesn't take *that* many hours. This made her mad. She threw some four-letter words at me and broke the vase in the hallway when she ran outside. But it's funny. I think I agree with her. She's right, in fact. I'm bored a lot these days, too. But she blames *me*, and she doesn't know how boring *she* can be. She just isn't interested in many things, which isn't her fault, I suppose. I have my hobbies, and she doesn't have any. And the hair styles and lipstick aren't exactly exciting either.

She'll probably join one of those PTA groups and spend all of her time with that when Petey's older, and I'll spend my time with the guys at the factory. The bowling's fine; the cards I don't really like all that much, but Jerry makes it worth it with all his jokes. Or maybe I'll spend my time with Petey and his cub scouts or something.

Sometimes Petey's crying depresses the hell out of me. It certainly never bores me.

Jane's dad died two months ago, and Jane is still saying how it was all our fault, how we should have taken him in with us, how he died because he didn't have anyone truly loving him. She always starts crying, and I always start shouting at her. Today I almost hit her.

Pete is having trouble in his fifth-grade class, after so much trouble in the fourth grade. We just never made him read enough at home, I think. He should like reading more than he does; then he wouldn't have so much trouble. Maybe Jane's PTA people are right. Maybe it's our fault. We don't read

much either. There's so much yardwork on the weekends, and the barbecues every other weekend, and the games on TV, and the scouts. If Pete was a girl, Jane would have to do it — be a den mother or whatever — and it wouldn't look so much like my fault.

I tried to get up to the top of the hill today, but they've been excavating it for a tract of Transamerican Medallion homes — $25,000 and up — the last one there's room for in the valley, they say. They've got a cyclone fence up around the hill now. I heard from Bob at the Bodega Bowl the other night that the valley floor is covered over with asphalt for a parking lot for that new Truesdale Center shopping area — the biggest in the state — and it's been like that for nine months. Obviously I haven't been out to look at the spot where the worms came down for quite a while. But every once in a while I do put on those saddle shoes — the same ones (Jesus, they're twelve years old now!) — and I go down the street, past all the juniper and birds -of-paradise, and I whistle — anything at all — and it reminds me of what happened back then. It helps. I have some things I'd rather not be thinking about, and so it helps.

Pete was busted for having marijuana on him at Poly High yesterday. The school won't turn him in, but they've suspended him for three weeks, and he's failing two classes anyway. We so much wanted him to try State next year. We've told him again and again what he'd have to do to get in, but it's never had an effect on him. He's got his friends, and the candy-apple GTO, and to hell with everything else!

Nancy is still cute in a little-girl way, though she's starting to get gangly. She's also starting to like boys, and I've argued with Jane a hundred times about the twelve-year-old bra thing. The real problem is, she likes this guy who's *fifteen*. She's always been Jane's favorite, but at least Jane's as upset as I am about the boyfriend situation.

We started seeing lawyers the same day that our dear Vice-President resigned.

The government of this country is so damned corrupt. I never could understand how we could let other countries make us fight their wars for them.

Pete dropped by two nights ago covered with grease from the shop, and Jane and I were arguing loud, and so he went away. I got mad and left too. I went to a motel and called Dorothy and she came over and stayed the night. We talked about taking a trip across the United States, and we both liked the idea.

When I got up the next morning, I caught myself whistling. I thought about whistling and whistles, and it depressed the hell out of me, and I stopped.

Dorothy drops me off in the morning and meets me for lunch. Jane was never that way. Dorothy's got quite an ass on her, and I'd hate to see her put on any more weight, but she's certainly fun when it counts. And she does like most of the things I like, and vice versa.

One thing, though. I do wish she was more interested in reading those books I keep trying to get her to read. I've tried to explain to her — and more than once — how logical it is that throughout history our gods would actually be alien visitors (after all, if there are worms out there, why not?) and that our religions and civilization would be gifts from them. I did hit a guy in a bookstore once — he laughed a little too loud when I was explaining the idea to her — and I think that turned her off a little.

The alimony hasn't hurt us too much, which is good, because Dorothy likes campers and motor homes practically as much as I do. We looked at a Revcon 456 the other day, and that's the one I think we'll get. It's streamlined, like a spaceship, and that's what I've been looking for.

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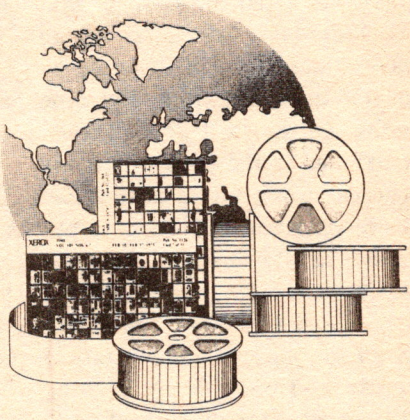

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In publishing, as in some other places, there is the effect of The Wise Money. It is not always necessary for a new byline or a new book or a new trend to be *per se* viable. Often enough, it's only necessary for it to be invested-in. As Damon Runyon said in another context, the race is not always to the swift or the victory to the strong, but that's the way to bet. Accordingly, you may expect to find plenty of copies on sale of *The Sword of Shannara*, in both editions, because Random House and Ballantine have gone to extraordinary lengths to make the product attractive to booksellers, and to tell them that the product is attractive to customers. This very review at this time instead of next month, and in different terms, is the result Ballantine's supplying me — as well as scores of much more influential people — with an advance set of bound pageproofs whose production cost and handling charges might finance an outfit like Advent: Publishers or T-K Graphics for a year. Which is to say nothing about the additional sums involved in the special booklet for retailers, the floor display stands for the Ballantine edition, the store-window poster of the Hildebrandt illustrations, the special postcard mailing, or the national advertising budget.

ALGIS BUDRYS
Books

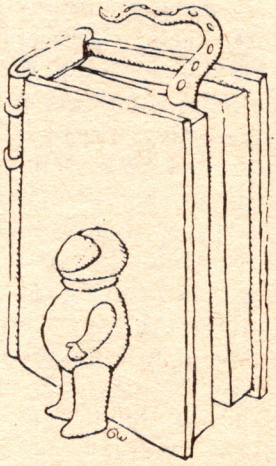
The Sword of Shannara, Terry Brooks, Random House, $12.95, Ballantine Books, $6.95 simultaneously

The Simple Art of Murder, Raymond Chandler, Ballantine Books, $1.75

The Starcrossed, Ben Bova, Pyramid Books, $1.50

Doorways in The Sand, Roger Zelazny, Avon Books, $1.50

Under Pressure, Frank Herbert, Ballantine Books, $1.50



Such a launch for a good — not great — fantasy first novel by a completely new writer is unheard-of. And it will cause confusion — has caused it, by the time you read this. Take a look at all the factors listed above, and you will find much of the explanation for the charges of "engineering," "sales-buying," "overselling," and "huckstering" which I assure you are going on in some quarters at this moment, and obscuring all objective consideration of Terry Brooks, his talent, his motives, his future, and his place in the eyes of people whose opinion matters to him.

In that same Paragraph One, above, you will also find listed most of the factors which account for the simultaneous forensic discussion which is being conducted at various mindsets ranging horizontally from the loftily academic to the crassly commercial. Is *Sword* harbinging a forthcoming flourish of fiction derived from *The Lord of the Rings* in the way that Campbellian SF derived from H.G. Wells's scientific romances? Is there in fact an entire generation of Frodo fans maturing into a cadre of artists who are about to flower in prose and its ancillary creations, so that the bounds of "SF" will expand markedly? Will this suck creativity away from older forms, such as newsstand science fiction? Will there be a *Frodo Magazine*? Will there be (many) (successful) competitors of it? Will the university of one's choice accept taxonomic studies of it as PhD credentials? Might one establish a teaching guide? How about a writers' conference? A TV series? A convention at which the series actors discourse on the nature of Reality, and plastic chainmail shirts are sold to ten-year-olds?

And, once again, no great heed to Terry Brooks, or to what he actually accomplished.

Or yet, you in particular are sitting there wondering what in the world I'm talking about. All the window posters, the dump bins, the national ads, the local dealer ads, the Sunday reviews, the fanzine discussions, the interfan bullsessions ... all, all have passed you by, as they do the majority of people,* and you would please like to know should you buy the book, and why.

Yes, you should. It is adventurous, epic in proportions, gets markedly better toward the second half, is quite nicely designed if not impeccably executed, and the illustrations are good for long interludes of staring and musing.

The price is high. On the other hand, there are 726 pages of story here — the paperback is nearly one-and-a-half inches thick — plus a color foldout, in addition to a

**Emphasis supplied.*

number of black-and-white oil paintings reproduced on the good book paper. If you are a bibliophile, a nostalgic for the old days of super-illustrated adventure fiction, or have a little bit of the wondering child left in you, you will not in due course regret the purchase or the reading. The odds are good you will re-read it at some time, or find a good friend to lend it to and discuss with. It is the sort of book that is an experience. The major portion of the marketing promotion translates into a dollars-and-cents restatement of this truth. Seen in that light, it is an attempt to show booksellers that there is once again merit — saleability; i.e., an occasional roast on the table, and maybe a new hall rug, or a payment on the heating bill — in this approach to publishing. And by extension, in this (new?) genre.

New in the sense that although the Tolkien books generated a great interest in sword-and-sorcery fiction, they themselves are a rarer sort of fantasy which is, apparently, more difficult to write and, perhaps, less easy to merchandise. It features not beefcake nor film-robed maidens nor dominatrix priestesses to be depicted on the paperback covers. It may in fact be quite true that only someone who met Frodo as a child can fluently and instinctively write in the manner. In a very real way, it may be that the only significant developmental interspersion from *Rings* toward *Shannara* is *Watership Down.**

What is the story about? Well, it's an epic journey, on which the mysterious Druid sends Shea, the half-elf stripling in quest of the Sword which, when grasped, will enable Good to finally overcome the ancient malevolence and the nearly victorious evil plans of the Warlock Lord. Enroute, Shea, and his half-brother, Flick Ohmsford, encounter a variety of additional characters, including elves, gnomes, dwarves, trolls, and the dreadful Skull-bearers, as well a series of human characters who are to some extent reminiscent of dwellers in Sherwood Forest. The book is original, but it is not innovative.

Brooks does not know, or chooses to circumvent, the fact that the plural of "dwarf" is "dwarves," that the permissible uses of the word "whom" are sharply circumscribed, that an intense, spontaneous patrol action is in fact the military opposite of a "pitched" battle, and that "decimate" is clearly not a synonym for "obliterate" if you have ever known why we call it the "decimal" system of counting. Nor is every catastrophe

But not Shardik. *Adams is moving in a direction that may be almost entirely his own.*

a "holocaust," &c., &c. Brooks is a young product of the modern American educational system, and in fact was a pre-law undergraduate, one assumes, since he is a midwestern attorney now. But many readers may not know these distinctions either, especially if it is true that there is a vast new market among people Brook's age. Even when these gaffes intrude — and "decimate" misused is one of my pet hackleraisers* — the small proportion of these quibbles within the whole narrative weight of the story is not tenably significant.

Brooks wrote this story in two parts — the first half while in college, the remainder some years later, or so I am told by Lester del Rey, his editor. This accounts for the superior technique and more picturesque quality of the latter half. The front end has the familiar tendency of not-quite-good writing to get in all the right things but to have the most dramatic ones happen offstage. I submit to you, for instance, that the escape of Hendel the Dwarf from the gnomes in the Pass of Jade is more important that Allanon the Druid sternly — almost menacingly — refusing, for the tenth or twentieth time, to give Shea the complete set of reasons for Shea's quest.

These things are why this is not a great book, but simply a good one of its kind. Which may indeed be a much more numerous, much more important kind within the graspable future. It is thus an important book. Whether you look at these factors as an instance of promotional efforts fulfilling their own prophecy, or whether you see them as completely or partly justifying the sort of presentation on which Random House has placed a daring and ultimately beneficial bet, *The Sword of Shannara* is in fact a premier event of the 1977 season. But meanwhile, Terry Brooks stands surrounded by brouhaha, with not one reliable input to tell him whether those hours alone with his manuscript and his psyche are in any way relevant to what has happened to him.

It's OK, fella. None of us ever know.

Speaking of writing, Ballantine Books has reissued Raymond Chandler's *The Simple Art of Murder*, a collection of short pieces. Some of you will know that. The title piece is not one of the four stories, but an essay. Some of us feel that Chandler was an absolute master of technique, and of literary comprehension:

**Classically, to arbitrarily kill every tenth man of a captured enemy, as a lesson in disputing the sovereignty of Imperial Rome. Usage has eroded this to mean leaving only ten percent standing, but not around my house. Either way, Brooks is mistaken.*

"At one o'clock in the morning, Carl, the night porter, turned down the last three table lamps in the lobby of the Windermere Hotel. The blue carpet darkened a shade or two and the walls drew back into remoteness. The chairs filled with shadowy loungers. In the corners were memories like cobwebs."

He wrote for *Black Mask* when it was the *Astounding* of its day and genre, and he wrote to essentially the same people — Depression survivors living below their expected stations, investing in lottery tickets.

If, conceivably, you do not know Chandler's work, here is a start. If you are interested in a terse, cogent analysis not only of the crime story but by extension of all popular fiction, and of the major, still-effective revolution it was undergoing just before World War II, here's where to look. And if you ever intend to be the best writer you possibly can, you have got to read — and periodically re-read — "The Simple Art of Murder," which is from *The Atlantic Monthly*.

Strange messages flash across a student's mind ... a novel of alien possession. "Ingenious" *The New York Times* is quoted as saying. Or so we are told at the bottom of the Avon cover for *Doorways in The Sand*, Roger Zelazny's rather good novel about a perpetual undergraduate with a tropism for heights and a stubborn reluctance to give up the star Stone, no matter how the aliens badger him.

At $1.50, this story is now very much worth the expenditure and the effort. I do not know what Zelazny will make of the following statement, but the truth remains that *Doorways*, which is only moderately cute, only average convoluted, and rather straightforwardly told, is one of the first hopeful signs from this author in some time. It has an ending which appears to have been paced into the scenario at some point earlier than the day it was typed, and it has a protagonist who is rather more than a collection of tics. It represents a return toward the power Zelazny once displayed, plus a maturation that runs deeper than witticism. It is not a reversion, though that would have been nice for us, but a progression, which is nice for Zelazny, as well as us. You cannot keep a good man down.

I have no idea what produced the slapdash, eccentric work of the past few years. I have some understanding of the external and internal pressures undergone by artists, and I assume they apply even more forcefully to someone of Zelazny's high stature. Therefore I sympathize. But a point had been reached at which it was time to shed a tear for the reader, as well.

In-group readers may enjoy Ben Bova's *The Starcrossed*, especially as they puzzle at the reason why the foreground figure on the cover looks slightly more like Harlan Ellison than he does like Bova. Those who recall the abortive *Starlost* syndicated TV series will begin to get the point of this production even more clearly. And those who understand why "Cordwainer Bird," a registered Ellison pseudonym, appeared in the *Starlost* credits in place of the real handle, will understand the Dedication. What you may not understand if you neither know nor care what happened to *The Starlost*, you may be puzzled by Bova's dedication to this mildly amusing book. Unless you remember that Bova was the science advisor to the producers, who by all accounts deserve an even more unremitted flaying than they receive here.

Random House, which publishes Vintage paperbacks — such as *More Women of Wonder* and *The Fantastic Pulps*, a Moskowitzian paleoanthology compiled by Peter Haining — is of course also the umbrella under which Ballantine snuggles. Ballantine is now splitting off its SF into a separate Random House division to be known, fittingly, as Del Rey Books. It is not an exaggeration to say that if there were no Judy-Lynn del Rey, the shape and nature of science fiction today would be radically different. It is an indisputable fact that her story selections and promotional ideas have made a great deal of money for Random House, thus encouraging this major supplier to provide more and more SF to the marketplace.

Similarly, Lester del Rey knows more about SF than anyone else who comes readily to mind, both in the historical sense and from the point of view of technique. He is additionally about as deeply dedicated a fantasy fan as you could find. It is an interesting and revelatory notion that Random House should choose to take this step in this manner. It is a pretty compliment to the del Reys. It is also a nice complement to DAW Books, which are named for their proprietors. Who would have thought, when we met in the Palm Gardens and Moskowitz excluded Sykora, that such days would come?

But while it yet exists, before it becomes the Del Rey Books SF Classic series, the Ballantine SF Classic series has reprinted Frank Herbert's *Under Pressure*. The cover shows something that looks like a spaceship. It is a submarine, and I would think that in view of the title, one would want to emphasize that. It is also subtitled "Originally, *The Dragon in the*

Sea," which is technically true of the Doubleday hardcover edition published many years ago. But this was "Under Pressure," the 1955 *Astounding Science Fiction* serial, which introduced this new writer to a stunned audience.

This is not the Frank Herbert of the *Dune* series, nor, thank God, of the half-dozen or so soporifics he turned out while trying to find what would work better. Eventually he found *Dune World*, and OK, that's fine, but why he wanted to depart from the basic attack he employed in *Under Pressure*, one would be hard put to understand.

It is a book with a jargony, dull beginning, and a last paragraph which, mixed with lard, could frost a Ladies' Auxiliary cake. In between, it is one of the finest science fiction suspense novels ever written, not at all out-dated — in fact, enhanced in relevance — by the times and events that have followed its first publication.

In short, if you don't like the cover, wonder about the title, don't care much for Frank Herbert as you know him, and think there ought to be more to SF than rockets, you may very well love this book.

(*Films, from p. 91*)

judiciously or injudiciously, cut from the film after about a week.

All this may or may not enhance you readers' feelings about *2001*. For me, it is a rare and precious work, which brought to me visually for the first time all the magic that had come to me before only through the medium of print. As I wrote to Arthur Clarke the day it was broadcast, "The experience of seeing it again for the first time is something I would give almost anything for."

Recorded readings of s/f are more and more to evidence these days. Generally their charm escapes me; the expert writer usually isn't the expert reader and the voice of my own mind's eye (if there is such a thing) usually does better. But now *Analog* (yes, the *other* one) has released a recorded dramatized version of Asimov's *Nightfall.*

Somehow Dr. Asimov didn't get his picture on the front of the album (though it is on the back), but the large letters A-S-I-M-O-V covering a handsome painting by Rick Sternbach get the idea across.

The classic story adapts pretty well to a radio drama treatment, though this particular production seems a bit stiff. Actors these days are just not used to being heard and not seen, I guess. In any case, an interesting addition to your s/f record library, if you go for such things.

In which Mr. Utley delves into the horror behind the horrors . . .

The Maw

by STEVEN UTLEY

He came on the midnight air, a mist-man, a wraith stretched across the centuries, a shadow two hundred years removed from the flesh that cast it, a wisp of smoky gray nothingness drifting down out of the sky, settling to earth in the darkness of an alley between two decrepit houses. Behind him in the alley, an emaciated mongrel dog sensed his almost-presence and backed away, growling. He stared at it for a moment, his eyes twin patches of oily blackness floating on a face that was only a filmy blob, then pressed his hands against sooty bricks and dug very nearly insubstantial fingers into cracks in the mortar. Time let him go at last, surrendered its hold on him, gave him over completely to the moment that was 11:58.09 p.m., Thursday, November 8, 1888.

The mist-man flexed his ectoplasmic fingers, marveling at the unfamiliar texture of the ancient, crumbling bricks. Though it had rained within the past hour, the air remained heavy with the smells of garbage, excrement and stale ginny vomit. He found himself wondering how badly London's East End slums must have stunk during the summer months.

From the direction of the street beyond the mouth of the alley came the sound of iron-rimmed wheels and iron-shod hooves on cobblestones. He watched as a horse-drawn wagon passed. Then, releasing his feather-soft grip on the wall, he glided out of the alley.

Distant bells began to chime the midnight hour.

Dimly illuminated by the light from a gas lamp across the street, two shabbily dressed men with drooping mustaches and tired faces were leaning against the front of the house on his left. They glanced up as he emerged onto the sidewalk, and he froze, an anomalous shadow.

"Lord Mayor's procession t'-morror," said one of the men softly.

The other man spat and, no less softly, muttered an obscenity.

"Y' goin'?" asked the first man.

His companion shrugged. "Not unless I get somethin' to eat first. And my doss money."

Both men looked away from the mist-man. He relaxed, satisfied.

Across the street, two women in long dresses emerged from their lodging house.

"There goes Katie and Maude again," said the first man. He sniggered. "Maybe we could get 'em to pay us for a change, eh, Bert?"

Both men laughed harshly. The mist-man moved away from them.

He moved at a leisurely pace, clinging to walls, occasionally gliding up over the buildings, knowing that he had two hours to kill before both he and his prey were due to arrive at Number 26 Dorset Street.

He moved through East London, and as he moved, he saw:

a burly man drag an obviously inebriated woman out of a house and hit her in the mouth with his clenched fist, knocking her backward into a pool of rain water; and while she moaned and gurgled, he stood over her and screeched, "*You bleedin' drunken 'ORE!*"

a woman dash out of an alley, jacket torn, hair disheveled, eyes wide and frightened; she was pursued by a sailor who stumbled, went down on one knee at the curb and, howling a curse, flung a bottle after her.

two stringy middle-aged women shouting at each other on the sidewalk in front of a doss house, something about one owing the other fourpence, something about it being needed for the night's lodgings, something about there being no such debt; and when someone appeared in the doorway and called to them to shut up, one of the women sat down on the pavement and burst into tears, wailing, "I *can't* stay h'out, Jenny, if 'e's prowlin' round tonight, 'e'll find me for sure!"

and, each time, the mist-man glided close, narrowly skirting whirlpools of anger and pain, of terror, of frustration, of despair, of dull resignation to existence in a place and time where dull resignation was the main prerequisite to survival.

He went down Brady and Cavell Streets, past the Jews' cemetery, past Buck's Row, where, on August 31st of that year, a prostitute named Mary Ann Nicholls had been found with her throat slashed and her abdomen sliced open.

Turning west at Commercial Road, he passed Berner Street, where Elizabeth "Long Liz" Stride had had her throat cut on September 30th, and moved down Aldgate to Mitre Square, where Catherine

Eddowes had been carved up less than forty-five minutes after the Stride killing.

He went back up Aldgate a short distance, to Goulston Street, to Crispen Street, almost to Bishopgate Station. At Lamb, he headed east, crossed Commercial Street and paused for a few minutes at Hanbury, where "Dark Annie" Chapman had been gutted on September 8th.

And, gliding south on Commercial to Christ Church, Spitalfields, turning right at Dorset Street, the mist-man spiraled in to Number 26, M'Carthy's Rents.

At Buck's Row, at Berner and Hanbury Streets, at Mitre Square, the shadow of Jack the Ripper lay more darkly than the night. They were the stations of the slaughter, and they had become shunned places. Elsewhere in the East End, the hysteria attending the murders and mutilations of four middle-aged prostitutes had begun to die down noticeably. There had not been another killing for almost six weeks, enough time for some people to venture so far as to say that the time of terror was gone for good.

But Jack the Ripper had warned them in his mocking letters, post cards and poems.

I AM DOWN ON WHORES AND I SHAN'T QUIT RIPPING THEM TILL I DO GET BUCKLED.

A cat raised its spine and spat as the mist-man passed beneath an arch at Number 26 Dorset Street and entered Miller's Court. The court was less than two meters wide, scarcely more than an alley bordered by houses whose whitewashed fronts made him think of skulls set out to bleach in the open air.

Number 13 Miller's Court, a small room at the back of M'Carthy's Rents, had been a parlor originally, but a wooden partition had been erected, sealing it off from the rest of the house. It was the first door on the right as one entered the court. Set into the rear wall, overlooking a water tap and some dustbins, were two mismatched windows hung with dirty muslin curtains.

The mist-man heard the clock at Christ Church ring the hour of two o'clock and knew that the one who had called him across the ages would be entering the court very soon. He went to the smaller window. As he had known there would be, two panes of glass had been broken out and the holes stuffed with rags.

He put his smoky hands into the openings and flowed into the room.

It was small, no more than six meters on a side. There was a fireplace directly opposite the door, and on the wall above the hearth was the room's sole concession to

interior decoration, a cheap print called *The Fisherman's Widow.* In the far corner was a cupboard containing a chunk of bread, some ginger-beer bottles, some odds and ends of crockery. Against the partition was an unmade bed, and beside the bed, a crude, rickety table.

The mist-man moved about the room like a puff of steam, touching the gravy-brown discolorations on the walls, sampling the stale bread by crumbling a corner between his fingers and pushing the particles deep into the smear that was his mouth, rubbing the dingy bedsheets between his hands. Then he heard footsteps in the court and slipped easily into the space between wall and bedstead.

The door swung inward, and Mary Jean Kelly entered. She was a stout but not unattractive Irish woman in her middle twenties, with blue eyes, a mass of hair that hung almost to her waist and a fresh, healthy complexion in keeping with neither her surroundings nor her alcoholism. She walked to the approximate center of the room, turned rather gracelessly and smiled at someone standing in the doorway.

"Come on in," she said brightly. "I don't bite, dear."

The man to whom she had sold herself in Dorset Street stepped into the room and quietly closed the door, and the third person there, the shadow behind the bed, murmured with satisfaction.

Ah. Ah. Yes. Ah.

The man was well-built, pale, of medium height, about thirty years old. His thick, dark-brown hair was parted down the middle. He had somewhat delicate-looking features, a fair mustache and eyes as deep and dark as the pit of perdition.

He was Jack the Ripper. Saucy Jacky. Spring-Heeled Jack. The East End harlot-butcher. The Whitechapel demon.

He was the man who, kept from mutilating Long Liz Stride by the untimely arrival of a hawker in Berner Street, had simply dashed west to Aldgate and dispatched Kate Eddowes to make up for it.

He was the grim jester who had mailed half of Eddowes' kidney to Mr. George Lusk of the Whitechapel Vigilance Committee.

He was, the mist-man knew, to be Mary Jean Kelly's final customer.

"Why don't you take off your coat?" she said. "You did pay for what's left of the night."

The pallid man shed his coat and carefully hung it on a nail between the windows, then watched as she began removing her clothes. She paused when she saw him looking at her and shook her head.

"A shy one, aren't we? Don't you want to take 'em off?"

"I... I would rather watch you first." A voice as smooth as velvet. "You're very pretty."

Mary Kelly beamed and finished pulling off her ribbed wool stockings. "D'you really mean that, sir?"

"Of course. I'm a man of my word."

The mist-man shivered. I AM DOWN ON WHORES AND I SHAN'T QUIT RIPPING THEM TILL I DO GET BUCKLED. He flowed up the wall and clung to the ceiling. I LOVE MY WORK AND WANT TO START AGAIN. YOU WILL SOON HEAR OF ME WITH MY FUNNY LITTLE GAMES. Below him, Mary Kelly drew the covers back to the foot of the bed and lay down, pink, plump, three months pregnant. MY KNIFE IS NICE AND SHARP I WANT TO GET TO WORK RIGHT AWAY IF I GET A CHANCE. The man sat on the edge of the mattress, one hand on her shoulder, the other hand out of sight. She started to say something, and at that moment her client clapped his hand over her mouth YOURS TRULY and raised the post-mortem knife JACK THE and the mist-man dropped, enveloped them, stilled them, flowed into their bodies... cradled them in an embrace softer than a breath.

Hear me, Jack, *the mist-man whispered, and his voice was like the sound of breeze-borne dry leaves scuttling along sidewalks,* and know that I speak the truth.

Gilles de Rais, Countess Elizabeth Báthory, Peter Kürten, Dean Corll, Sylvestre Matushka, Richard Speck, Charles Whitman, Ludwig Tessnow, Adolph Eichmann, all of your predecessors and successors in the business of mass murder, all men and women possessed of a hunger so great, so terrible, that it exists almost as an entity separate and whole unto itself: a beast that is all maw, a bottomless gullet of a thing whose appetite can never be appeased, from whose service there is no escape.

(*Across an infinite distance came the sound of clocks ringing the half-hour and then three o'clock and then half-past three.*)

The maw must always have more, Jack. Excess must pile upon excess. Nothing is too great for it to swallow whole.

All of the blood, the insane angers, the senseless cruelties, all of the processes by which human beings are turned to garbage, all of the horrifying things that people may do to one another, all, all is food for the maw.

Whatever you may tell yourself as the blade goes in and across — that you are calling attention to conditions in the slums; that whores are an abomination in the sight of

God and must be ruthlessly exterminated; that women are to blame and must be punished for your being homosexual or impotent or syphilitic; whatever — from this time on, you will know, in your own secret moments of terror, that the real reason you do it lies deeper than anyone may descend.

In Hell.

In the very core of your being.

In the place where the maw is.

Some, like Kürten, the monster of Dusseldorf, had learned to live with it. To enjoy its presence. To feed it choice tidbits as though it were some sort of pet.

Some made excuses for it. Countess Elizabeth Báthory said: Those six hundred fifty girls had to die, that I might bathe in their blood and be forever young; *and Adolph Eichmann said:* Those millions of Jews had to die, that we might restore and preserve the purity of the race; *and that made everything all right as far as either of them was concerned.*

Some hated it, and their hatred only served to make it stronger, and the mist-man released Mary Jean Kelly, who pulled away from the hand covering her mouth and said, "Oh, murder!" And then he let Jack the Ripper go, and the postmortem knife went into the woman's neck, slashing the throat open to the spine. And he drifted back to the ceiling to watch as Jack

sliced off the ears, nose and breasts and placed them on the table beside the bed

opened the torso from crotch to collarbone and placed the heart and kidneys on the table

removed the uterus and its three-month-old fetus

removed the liver and placed it upon one thigh

slit the sac of the stomach and pushed the fingers on the left hand into the opening

gashed the cheeks and scraped the skin from the forehead

carved the flesh from the right thigh, all the way down to the bone, and placed the bloody strips of striated tissue on the table

sobbed with frustration, because he knew now, he knew, that satisfaction was never to be his, that what he had done had been done in an attempt to sate another's needs, that even the systematic reduction of Mary Jean Kelly's body to something unrecognizable, something no longer human, was not enough.

And, from deep within, from a level so far below the surface of his conscious mind that the murderer was unaware of it, a small, plaintive voice: Why did you have to tell me? Why did you have to ruin it? I was convinced of the rightness of what I

was doing. I truly believed that I had a mission to perform. Why did you take that away from me?

Because, the mist-man answered, and, somewhere outside, bells rang six times, and the sky began to lighten.

Jack the Ripper cleaned the long blade of the post-mortem knife, wiped his hands on one of Mary Kelly's petticoats and put his coat on. He paused at the door to survey the carnage he had visited upon Number 13 Miller's Court. The mist-man settled upon him like a cloak.

They went out, silently closing the door behind themselves, at 6:15 a.m., and none disputed their passage through the streets of London's East End.

In Fleet Street, they paused. Jack the Ripper withdrew a post card from his coat pocket. It was addressed to Central News Office, London City. The reverse side was covered with hastily scrawled verse and a crude drawing of a dagger.

Ripper Jack's a friend of mine,
He keeps me on a tether.
When the sun is high and fine,
We stay home together.
When the nights are cold and gray,
He puts me in his sack,
And when he lets me out to play,
Don't ever turn your back!

I was right! I was right to do what I did to those sluts, I had definite reasons, I, I alone, *am wholly responsible for what I have done!* I AM DOWN ON WHORES AND I SHAN'T QUIT....

The mist-man rose from the murderer's shoulders but made no reply.

Jack the Ripper dropped the post card into a puddle of muddy water and ground it under his heel. Hopelessly sad, he proceeded down Fleet Street to King's Bench Walk in the Inner Temple, and as he disappeared into a house there, the mist-man, floating high above Fleet Street, heard the thin bleak voice cry out in anger, in sorrow, in pain.

WHY COULDN'T YOU LEAVE ME ALONE? WHY DID YOU HAVE TO TELL ME? WHY HAVE YOU UNDERMINED THE RIGHTNESS OF MY CAUSE? *WHY?*

The mist-man floated up into the cold London air (*some, the deadliest of all, simply accept the maw for what it is*) and felt Time ease its slick fingers into him, pulling him back across itself to his proper matrix (*and if they are particularly inventive, they can always find ways to appease its hunger for pain and blood*); and in the instant before he slipped completely out of November 9, 1888 (*without actually soiling their own hands*), he called back, *It* was *terribly cruel of me, wasn't it, Jack?*

This new Jane Yolen story will be included in a collection titled THE HUNDREDTH DOVE & OTHER STORIES, to be published shortly by T. Y. Crowell.

The Maiden Made of Fire

by JANE YOLEN

Once on the edge of a great Eastern forest there lived a charcoal burner named Ash. He was a kind of poet. Surrounded by the gray reminders of his trade, he did not see the dust. Instead, he spent most of his time staring into the heart of the fire where he saw a world of bright, fierce beauty.

And when the kiln was all burnt and opened up, Ash would sit and talk to the scattered coals in rhyme as sharp and as bright as flames. The woodsmoke was intoxicating, and he was always slightly addled by its smell.

But seeing him squatting in the dust and talking to the burned-out ends of fire, the villagers thought Ash more than a little mad, a summoner of demons. And so the poor lad got himself an evil name and was friendless because of it.

Yet if he was lonely, he never talked of it. He continued building his kilns like his father before him, making charcoal for the village, and talking fancies into the smoke-filled air.

One evening as he sat and stared into the heart of his fire, Ash thought he saw a maiden lying on the coals, glowing red and gold. He shook his head vigorously to shake the dream from it, but when he looked again, the girl was still there.

So he leaped up and reached into the fire, heedless of the flames that licked his wrists, and pulled the firemaid out.

She came slowly up from the coals and stood before him. Her hair hung below her shoulders in blackened wisps and her eyes were brilliant points of light. She was wrapped in nothing but smoke.

"Who are you?" whispered Ash.

The girl was silent except with her hands. And when she moved them, little tendrils of smoke hovered in the air between them.

"Who are you?" Ash asked again.

Still the girl did not speak.

"Shall I answer for you?" he said and, when she nodded slightly,

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added, "Since you are a maiden made of fire, Brenna shall be your name."

Shyly he held out his grimed hand to her, but when she moved toward him, the heat that came from her was so intense that he stepped back. Only then did he realize that his hands had been burned by the flames, and he put them behind him as if ashamed of some weakness.

"You need something to wear. You will be chilled."

At that, the girl threw her head back and laughed, and her laughter was light and crackling.

Then Ash laughed too, for he realized that Brenna was not cold. Wrapped in her mantle of smoke, she was far warmer than he.

He signaled her towards him again. This time with his head, and she stepped forward suddenly. Just as suddenly she stopped and put up her hands before her, feeling the air as if it were a wall.

Looking at the ground to see what hindered her, Ash saw the outlines of the kiln. Around the entire inside of the burned-out kiln she stepped, and was stopped again and again by a wall neither of them could see.

Brenna sank to her knees. Drops of fire rained from her eyes. She pointed helplessly to the coals. The embers were the borders of her world. She could not cross over.

She turned her face up at last and it was ashen and desolate. She signaled for him to come to her instead. But the charcoal burner was too afraid of her fires.

Then Ash had a thought. "I shall make you more room," he cried.

Quickly he built little beehive-shaped kilns side by side, small fiery alcoves that burned swiftly and were soon no more than mounds of glowing coals. By night's end, he had made Brenna a palace of embers, large and rambling, where she could run like mist through the smoke-filled halls.

Brenna thanked him again and again with her brilliant smile and tendrils of smoke she signed with her hands. And though Ash did not dare go close to her, with that smile and those thanks he was content.

For days they lived that way. Ash neglected his charcoal kilns and instead told Brenna stories and rhymes and sang her songs which she accepted with her crackling, light laugh. He brought her little offerings: shiny leaves, smooth nuts, woven baskets which she turned to flame with her touch. At each blaze she clapped her hands together in delight and Ash clapped with her.

In turn, Brenna danced for him, leaping high over the heaped up coals. And she drew pictures in the dust and smoke, pictures of a fierce

bright country where firebirds flew through blazing trees and incandescent flowers flared upward toward a glowing sky.

And so the days passed for them, burning out into nights filled with fiery stars. But at last the village elders came, with their coal-black robes and their bitter mouths. They stood in a circle around him, their voices brittle.

"Where is our charcoal?" one asked, his voice rising in pitch. "While you sing and dance here in the clearing, you neglect your work."

The second joined in. "Your work is to build kilns and tend the fires and set the charcoal aside for our needs. Yet for a week you have done nothing but posture before the flames and talk wild fancies into the air."

Ash tried to escape from the circle of elders, but they moved closer to him, like a tightening noose. He tried to explain. "I am talking to Brenna, my love, my bride."

The elders whispered to one another. "What is he saying? What does he mean?"

The oldest one silenced them with his hand. "He is quite mad. He is in love with the fire."

Ash turned round and round pleading with the circle of men. "But she is there. Can you not see her? Her hair is black and her eyes are bright and she is like a steady flame."

The oldest one spoke coldly. "There is nothing there. No girl. And no charcoal either."

"But she is there. Brenna. She is there." Ash pointed towards the embered palace. Yet even as he spoke there was doubt in his voice, and at that doubt the maiden made of fire began to fade. Slowly, like a candle guttering out, her outline wavered. She held her arms, mere outlines now, towards Ash. She sighed and it was the sound of a fire being extinguished.

Ash looked again at the circle of villagers around him. Then back again at Brenna who was but a soft glow. With an effort, he thrust his doubt from him and pushed through the elders.

"Brenna," he called.

At his voice, she grew brighter, clearer. With a hand that dripped fragile tears of flame, she signaled him to her.

He leaped over the low embers and ran straight into Brenna's arms. They flared up in a brilliant burst of light, a star in nova, that singed the robes of the watching men. Then in a moment, the fire-maid and the charcoal burner were gone. All that was left was a pile of ashes that smoldered for years, sending up a pale spiral of smoke.

No one from the village was ever able to put it out.

Gahan Wilson

"Gee, I don't know; this is kind of depressing!"

OF ICE AND MEN

Breathes there a man with soul so dead as never to suspect that there is a conspiracy against him on the part of the Universe?

As an example — I am frequently on the road to some speaking engagement or other. Since I don't fly, I get there by automobile. I am *convinced* that the incidence of rain on days when I drive is far higher than the incidence of rain generally.

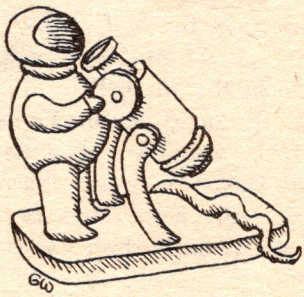
I get a kind of dour satisfaction when I start out on a beautifully sunny day, with the weather bureau breathlessly predicting prolonged droughts, and then see the rain-clouds gathering and the raindrops beginning to fall. It gives me a warm feeling to know that the countryside will get the welcome rain only because of me and my good old automobile.

Here's another case. I bought a house in Newton, Massachusetts and moved in on March 12, 1956. For the first time in my life I was a landowner. It was a pleasant, middle-sized house, with a two-car garage beneath, and a nice, wide deep driveway. No longer would I have to park my car at the curb.

On March 16, 1956, it started snowing. By the morning of March 17, there were three feet of snow in the driveway. I had never shovelled

ISAAC ASIMOV

Science



snow much in my life (one of the advantages of being a perennial tenant), but I had bought a snow shovel as one of the appurtenances of landed gentry-hood. (I had also bought a lawnmower.) I now took snow shovel in hand and got to work with rapidly diminishing enthusiasm.

For three days, I sweated and shovelled and grunted and puffed, on and off, until my driveway was finally clear. By the morning of March 20, I could view a clear driveway again, set between icy mountains.

On March 20, we had a second storm and *four* feet of snow drifted into the driveway. It's a painful memory which I will not further elaborate upon at this time, but will someone kindly tell me why the worst double snow storm in the history of the Boston weather bureau had to come during the very first week in which I owned a garage and driveway?

But there is a silver lining. That work represented my personal experience with Ice Ages and now makes it possible for me to write about them, and their effect on human beings, with a feeling of inner authority. I will, however, write about Ice Ages in my own inimitable fashion — very roundabout.

Imagine the Earth revolving about the Sun. The curve of its orbit is planar — that is, you can imagine an infinitely thin plane passing through the center of the Earth and the center of the Sun — and the Earth, as it moves around the Sun, will remain in that plane at all times.

If the Earth's axis of rotation were exactly perpendicular to the orbital plane, then the half of the Earth's globe which would be in Sunlight would, at all times, be bounded at the north by the North Pole and at the South by the South Pole. As the Earth rotated on its axis and revolved about the Sun, that would not change.

If this were the case, a person standing at either the North Pole or the South Pole, on a stretch of ground perfectly flat all the way to the horizon in every direction, would see the Sun forever at the horizon*, and moving steadily about the horizon, east to west, and completing a circle every 24 hours.

In actual fact, though, the axis is tilted to the orbital plane by an angle of 26.44229 degrees, and this spoils that pretty picture.

Suppose we imagine the Earth to be located in its orbit in a place where the northern part of the axis is tipped directly toward the Sun

**The effect of atmospheric refraction would actually lift it just above the horizon.*

(see Figure 1). The entire north frigid zone — all the Earth's surface within 26.44229 degrees of the North Pole — is exposed to Sunlight, in that case.

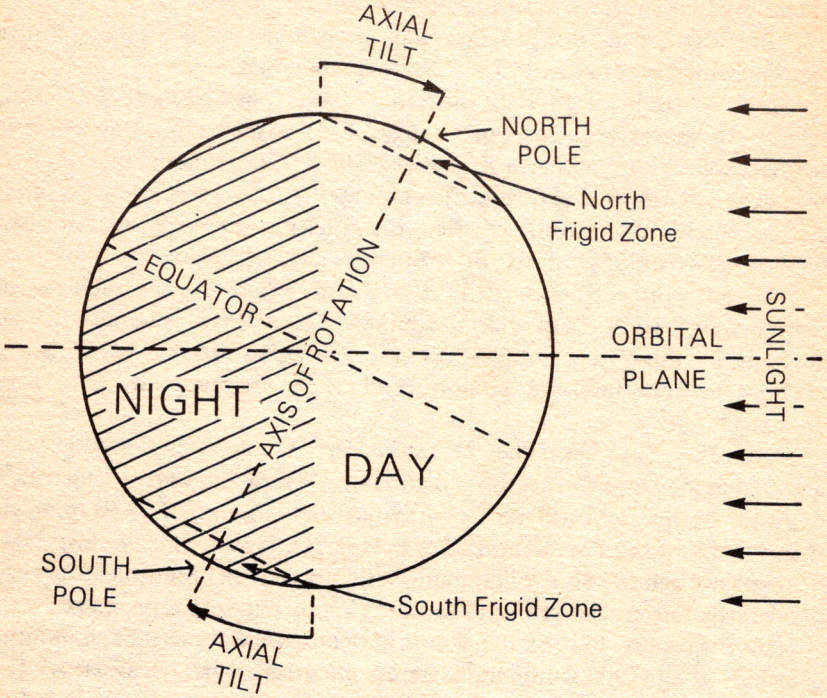


Figure 1 — The Tilt of the Axis

To any observer within the north frigid zone, under those circumstances, the Sun will be seen to circle the sky, without setting. At the North Pole, the Sun will make a level circle, 26.44229 degrees above the horizon (if we ignore the effect of atmospheric refraction). At a distance from the North Pole, the Sun will make a tilted circle, reaching the highest point at noon and the lowest at midnight. At a distance of 26.44229 degrees from the North Pole, the Sun will touch the horizon at midnight.

The south frigid zone, on the other hand, will be entirely in darkness, and the Sun will not rise at all at any time during the day. At a distance of

26.44229 degrees from the South Pole, the Sun will just touch the horizon at noon. (Again we ignore the effect of atmospheric refraction.)

In general, under these conditions, the whole northern hemisphere will be getting more darkness than daylight.

The situation, as I've just described it, is what exists at the summer solstice, which takes place at June 21 on our calendar.

As the Earth revolves about the Sun, however, the direction of the axis, relative to the stars, does not change. Half a year after the summer solstice, when the Earth is at the other end of its orbit, the axis is slanted so that the North Pole is tipped directly away from the Sun. At that time, at December 21, the winter solstice, the situation is exactly as described for June 21 except that north and south have switched places.

At the winter solstice it is the south frigid zone which is in twenty-four-hour daylight and the southern hemisphere, generally, which gets more light than dark, while the north frigid zone is in twenty-four-hour dark and the northern hemisphere, generally, gets more dark than light.

From June 21 to December 21, as the Earth revolves, days grow shorter and nights longer in the northern hemisphere, while days grow longer and night shorter in the southern hemisphere. From December 21 to June 21, the situation is reversed. From June 21 to December 21, the northern hemisphere gets more daylight and solar heat than does the southern hemisphere. From December 21 to June 21, the situation is reversed.

It is the tipping of the axis, then, that causes the seasons. The months centered about the summer solstice are spring and summer in the northern hemisphere; fall and winter in the southern hemisphere.* For the months centered about the winter solstice, it is fall and winter in the northern hemisphere, spring and summer in the southern hemisphere.

This uneveness evens out over the course of the year. The changes are just about symmetrical north and south, and in the long run, every spot on Earth's surface gets roughly equal amounts of darkness and light. (Actually, as a result of atmospheric refraction, every spot on Earth's surface gets a little bit more light than darkness, and this uneveness becomes more marked the nearer we are to the poles.)

Light, however, is not equally effective everywhere. The farther from the equator we are, the lower in the sky the Sun is, on the average, and the less heat is delivered per unit surface. On the whole, then, the average

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**To call June 21 the* summer *solstice is north-hemisphere chauvinism.*

local temperature goes down as we move away from the Equator, north or south.

As it happens, the Earth is a very watery planet, and its average temperature, as a planet, is not very far above the freezing point of water.

As we go farther and farther from the Equator, north or south, and as the average local temperature drops, it becomes more and more likely that the temperature will drop low enough to freeze water. Around each pole, therefore, there is ice. During the half-year centering about the winter solstice, the ice tends to advance in the far north and retreat in the far south. During the half-year centering about the summer solstice, the ice tends to retreat in the far north and advance in the far south.

The axial tilt therefore results in a pendulum-like swing of the ice, the swing being in opposite phases in the two hemispheres.

Yet the swing appears to be in equilibrium. Each advance is to roughly the same point in the winter, each retreat to the same point in the summer. The amount of freezing that takes place in the winter is just balanced by the amount of melting that takes place in the summer, and on the whole the ice remains within bounds.

But will that always be so? What happens if, for some reason, just a little more freezing takes place in the winter than melting does in the summer. Each year a little more ice would then accumulate than had existed the year before, and the world might, little by little and year by year, become far more icy than it is now.

Could that happen? Yes, it could. We know that it could happen in the future because it *has* happened in the past — and a number of times. There have been Ice Ages recurring with a kind of periodicity.

Why should there be Ice Ages? If things are in balance now, what could there be that would throw them off balance?

Could the Sun, for some reason, grow cooler at times? There's no evidence for that. Could the Sun have passed through regions in space in which dust was thicker and absorbed Solar heat before it reached the Earth? There's no evidence for that, either.

So let's consider the Earth's orbit further and see if there is any uneveness to it at all.

If the Earth moved about the Sun in a perfect circle, with the Sun at the center of the circle, the earth would remain at a constant distance from the Sun at all times. Barring changes in the Sun itself, or in the space around the Sun, the Earth would receive heat at a constant rate from the Sun.

This, however, is not so. As was first pointed out by the German astronomer, Johannes Kepler, in 1609, the Earth moves about the Sun in an ellipse.

An ellipse can best be described, non-mathematically, as a kind of flattened circle (see Figure 2).

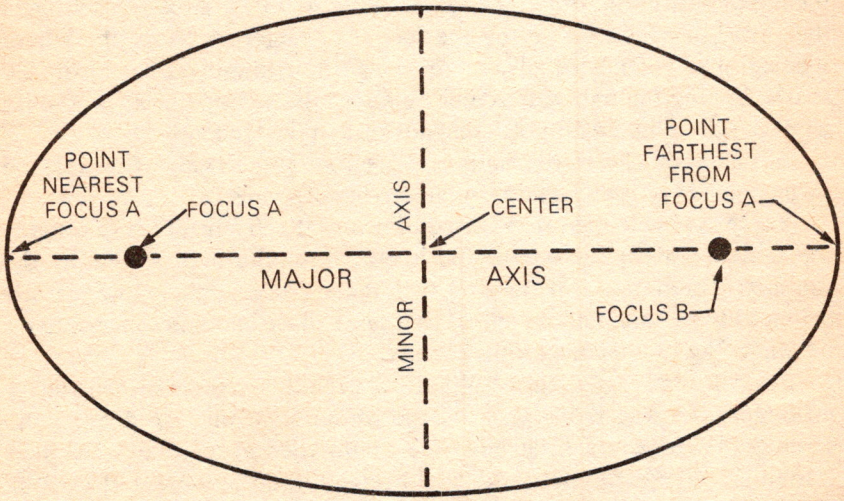

Figure 2 — The Ellipse

In a circle, every diameter (that is, any straight line passing through the center from one side of the circle to the other) is equal in length. In an ellipse, the diameters vary in length. The shortest diameter is from one flattened side to the other flattened side, and that is the "minor axis." At right angles to the minor axis is the longest diameter, which is the "major axis." Where the major and minor axes cross is the center of the ellipse.

On the major axis, there are two points called the "foci" (singular, "focus"), one on one side of the center, and the other an equal distance on the other side of the center. One property of the ellipse is this: If a straight line is drawn from one focus to any point on the curve of the ellipse, and from that point another straight line is drawn back to the other focus, the total length of the two lines is always the same and is always equal to the length of the major axis.

If we concentrate on one of the foci (call it Focus A) then we find that

its distance from the curve of the ellipse changes continually as we mark out that curve. The part of the ellipse which is closest to Focus A is the end of the major axis on the same side of the center. The part of the ellipse which is farthest from Focus A is the end of the major axis on the other side of the center.

The more flattened the ellipse, the farther the two foci are from the center and from each other.

If the ellipse is flattened only very slightly, then the two foci are close to the center and to each other. The difference in distance from a focus to the near end of the major axis and from that same focus to the far end of the major axis is not, then, very great. If the ellipse is very flattened, the two foci are widely separated from the center and each other, and are very near the opposing ends of the ellipse. In that case, each focus is very close to the near end of the major axis and very far from the far end. The difference in distances from a focus to various parts of the ellipse is, in that case, enormous.

Another way of looking at it is this —

The more flattened an ellipse is, the farther apart the foci are and the closer they are to the ends of the ellipse. Therefore, the more flattened an ellipse is, the larger the distance between the foci as compared to the length of the major axis. The ratio of the distance between the foci to the length of the major axis is called the "eccentricity" (from Greek words meaning "out of center").

When an ellipse is infinitesimally flattened, the foci are an infinitesimal distance from the center and from each other so that the eccentricity is virtually equal to zero. If the ellipse is flattened into something that is only infinitesimally removed from a straight line, the foci are only an infinitesimal distance from the ends of the straight line and the eccentricity is virtually equal to one. For any actual ellipse, the eccentricity lies between 0 and 1, and the smaller the value the nearer the ellipse is to a circle.

What has all this to do with Earth's orbit about the Sun?

Well, not only is the orbit an ellipse, but the Sun is located not at the center, but at one of the foci. That means that if you imagine a line drawn along the major axis of the Earth's elliptical orbit, the Sun will be on that line, but closer to one end of the ellipse than to the other, (see Figure 3).

When the Earth passes the end of the major axis which is on the same side of the center as the Sun-focus is, the Earth is then at a minimum

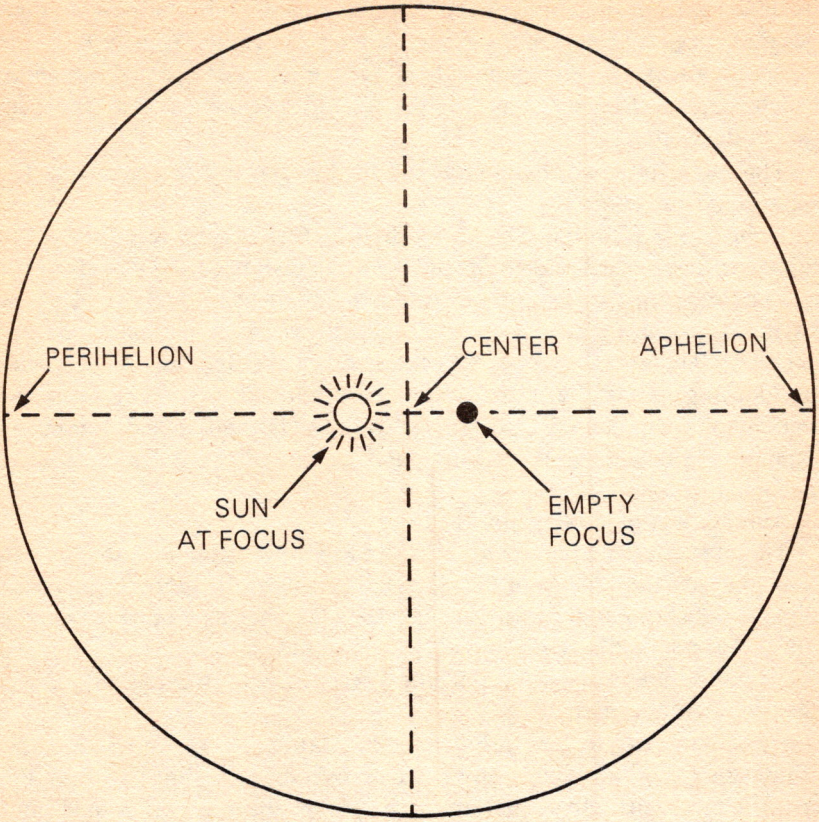

Figure 3 — Perihelion and Aphelion

distance from the Sun. It is then at "perihelion" (from Greek words meaning "near the Sun"). Six months later, it is at the other end of the major axis, and it is farthest from the Sun. It is then at "aphelion" (from Greek words meaning "away from the Sun").

Fortunately for life on Earth, the eccentricity of Earth's orbital ellipse is not very high. It is, in fact, only 0.01673, and if you drew an ellipse with that exact eccentricity, you could not tell, by eye, that it was not a circle.

Still, in an ellipse as enormous as that of Earth's orbit, even a small eccentricity is large in terms of kilometers. The major axis of Earth's orbit

is 299,000,000 kilometers (185.8 million miles) long, and the two foci are therefore separated by 5,002,000 kilometers (3,108,000 miles).

At perihelion, then, the Earth is 5,002,000 kilometers (3,108,000 miles) closer to the Sun than it is at aphelion. At perihelion, the Earth is 147,000,000 kilometers (91,350,000 miles) from the Sun, while at aphelion, the Earth is 152,000,000 kilometers (94,450,000 miles) from the Sun.

That's a difference of about 3.3 percent, which isn't very much really. It means the orb of the Sun is slightly larger at perihelion than at aphelion, but not enough to be noticed by non-astronomers. It means that the Earth moves faster in the perihelion half of the orbit than in the aphelion half since they are not of exactly equal lengths, but again who would notice?

Finally, though, it means that at perihelion we get more heat from the Sun than at aphelion. The heat we get varies inversely as the square of the distance, so that it turns out Earth gets almost 7 percent more heat at perihelion than at aphelion.

Let's look at it this way. Half-way between perihelion and aphelion (at one end of the minor axis of the ellipse), the Earth is at about its average distance from the Sun and is receiving about an average amount of heat.

If it is then moving toward the perihelion, through the perihelion and back to the other end of the minor axis, then during that half of Earth's orbit, Earth is receiving more than average heat from the Sun, with a maximum of a little over 3 percent above average at perihelion.

As the Earth then moves through the aphelion and back to the starting point, it then receives less than average heat in that half of the orbit with a minimum of a little over 3 percent below average at aphelion.

Does this matter?

It wouldn't, if the Earth's axis were perfectly upright, since both northern and southern hemisphere would then share equally in the shifting heat-receipt in the course of the year. But the axis is tilted; how does that affect things?

Earth reaches its perihelion on January 2* and its aphelion on July 2. It so happens that January 2 is less than two weeks after the winter solstice, while July 2 is less than two weeks after the summer solstice.

This means that at the time the Earth is at or near perihelion, and getting more heat than usual, the northern hemisphere is deep in winter,

---

**That's my birthday, but I don't suppose there's any connection.*

while the southern hemisphere is deep in summer. The extra heat means that the northern winter is milder than it would be if the Earth's orbit were circular, while the southern summer is hotter.

At the time the Earth is at or near aphelion and getting less heat than usual, the northern hemisphere is deep in summer, while the southern hemisphere is deep in winter. The heat deficiency means that the northern summer is cooler than it would be if the Earth's orbit were spherical and the southern winter is colder.

We see, then, that the combination of Earth's orbital ellipticity and its axial tilt produces an asymmetry. The northern hemisphere has a less extreme swing between summer and winter then the southern hemisphere does. The difference is not much but it is there.

This might be taken as meaning that the advance-and-retreat of ice in the far south is more extreme than in the far north. The colder winters of the far south mean a further advance of the ice than in the far north. The hotter winters of the far south mean a further retreat of the ice than in the far north. You might feel that this means it is the southern hemisphere which is, at the moment, in greater peril of an Ice Age than the northern hemisphere is.

If you think that, you're wrong. It is actually the less extreme swing which encourages an Ice Age, for changes in ice-accumulation are more sensitive to changes in summer temperature than in winter temperature.

Thus, a slightly lower average winter temperature does not necessarily mean more snow, nor does a slightly higher average winter temperature necessarily mean less snow. The reverse is more likely true. A slightly higher winter temperature, (but one that is still below the freezing point) means more water vapor in the air and therefore *more* snow.

On the other hand, a slightly lower summer temperature means less melting, and there's no alternative to that.

The northern hemisphere, with its slightly milder winters and cooler summer, therefore tends to have more snow and less melting than the southern hemisphere does, so that if there is any danger of an Ice Age it is in the northern hemisphere rather than in the southern.

But the northern hemisphere has had Ice Ages in the past. If the summer-winter temperature swing tends to favor Ice Ages right now, why did the ones in the past stop? Are there mitigating circumstances now?

Well, in the course of the half of Earth orbit that is closer to the Sun, the Earth, feeling a stronger gravitational pull, moves a bit more quickly than it does in the other half. That means it takes Earth about 186.5 days

to go from one end of the minor axis of its orbital ellipse through aphelion to the other end of the minor axis. It takes Earth only about 178.8 days to go from that other end of the minor axis through the perihelion back to the first end.

In the northern hemisphere, fall and winter take place during the perihelion half of the orbit and are only 178.8 days long, taken together. It is the spring and summer which are in the aphelion half of the orbit and which are 186.5 days long altogether.

The northern winter, then, which has the potentiality of producing more snow because it is slightly milder than the southern winter, is cut a little short and therefore does not produce as much snow as it might if the seasons were all equal in length. The northern summer, which is short on ice-melting potentiality because it is slightly cooler, gets in a little more work at it than it otherwise would if the seasons were equal in length.

The result is that the situation, north and south, is not as asymmetric as one might suppose. Or, at least, one asymmetry tends to cancel out the other asymmetry.

The cancelling is not complete. The slightly cooler summers of the northern hemisphere still encourage the Ice Age even despite their somewhat greater length.

Which leaves us still with the question of why there are Ice Ages at some times and not at others. If the combination of axial tilt and elliptical orbits is enough to produce an Ice Age in the northern hemisphere, why

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doesn't it produce one? If it is not enough to produce an Ice Age, why have Ice Ages occurred in the past?

Ah, but we're not through yet with the peculiarities of Earth's orbit. The orbit does not repeat itself exactly through all eternity. For that matter, neither is Earth's axial tilt fixed for all eternity.

Both orbit and tilt would be fixed, if Earth and Sun were alone in the Universe, but they are not alone. The Moon is present also, as are the planets and even the distant stars. Each of these other bodies have a gravitational field, and each of those gravitational fields has the potentiality of influencing the Earth's motion.

All these other bodies are much smaller than the Sun, or much more distant than the Sun, or both, so that none can, in any way, compete with the Sun's overwhelming gravitational effect on Earth. Despite all the pulls in the Universe, therefore, Earth continues its stately motion about the Sun, almost unaffected by the other objects in existence.

Almost unaffected. Not completely unaffected.

The extraneous pulls to which the Earth is subjected produces minor changes in the Earth's orbit (perturbations), all of which are very small indeed over ordinary time spans so that they don't affect ordinary human affiars at all in the space of a lifetime, or bother anyone but astronomers.

Even very small perturbations can, in the long run, produce effects out of all proportion to their size, however, and it is in tiny perturbations that the secret of the Ice Ages is now thought to rest.

And it is those perturbations we'll take up next month.

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This story first appeared in Cavalier *back in 1968. We liked it a lot, thought it seemed more at home here and decided to reprint it. It is a gripping and inventive and ultimately surprising story about a kind of time travel.*

The Primal Solution

by ERIC NORDEN

There were few Jews in Linz. In fact, I even took them for Germans. The absurdity of this idea did not dawn on me because I saw no distinguishing feature but the strange religion. The fact that they had, as I believed, been persecuted on this account sometimes almost turned my distaste at unfavorable remarks about them into horror .... for the Jew was still characterized for me by nothing but his religion and therefore, on grounds of human tolerance, I maintained my rejection of religious attacks in this case as in others .... But then a flame flared up within me [and] to my deep and joyful satisfaction, I had at last come to the conclusion that the Jew was no German ... For me this was the time of the greatest spititual upheaval I have ever had to go through. I had ceased to be a weak-kneed cosmopolitan and become an anti-Semite. .... Hence today I believe that I am acting in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator; by defending myself against the Jew, I am fighting for the work of the Lord.

— *Mein Kampf*, by Adolf Hitler.

Tel Aviv, Wednesday, October 13, 1959.

The project is in trouble. On my desk this morning two memos, one from the Technion Bursar, old Kravitz, the other from Zirin, in Jerusalem. At least the two of them haven't compared notes yet. Kravitz I can stall, but Zirin instructs me to appear before the university grants board on Friday. Instructs, not asks. It's a matter of weeks now, perhaps even days, but they are closing on me, a pack of spavined bureaucratic hounds snuffling on my trail. My mistake was ever trying to explain any of it to them — if I had played their game, strangled the reports in jargon, "anticipated results," and soothed their shopkeepers' souls with syllogisms, I would have won the time I need. I was a fool to ever try and win them over; "it is impossible to argue with unresist-

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ing inbecility." Dear Dr. Johnson, how well I know it now!

Jerusalem, Friday, October 15, 1959.

It was bad, but not fatal. Zirin no longer even makes a pretense of sympathy. The others, thank God, are so dense they can't follow either of us! Except Lochner, sitting in for the Weizmann Institute at Rehovot; he's always been a strange fish, he just sits there looking at me appraisingly, as if I'm one of his damned bugs on a slide. But when Zirin demands an immediate suspension, Lochner moves that I be given two more weeks to present a final progress report. The others follow his lead, the Gadarene swine; it fits their sterile lust for compromise, and Zirin glares at all of us. But I have two weeks. I can feel the texture of each day under my fingertips like a woman's flesh. I cannot fail, but the words echo mockingly. Tomorrow, back to the laboratory ....

Tel Aviv, Saturday, October 16, 1959.

I return to find that Zvi has authorized use of the computer to Rappaport and his stooges. He thought I would be away for the weekend, he tells me. It's an effort not to strike his dull suety face. Later, I am ashamed. He is a good boy. Loyal. I can't expect him to understand. I must pull myself together, one day lost will not tip the scales. Tonight I will review the project records, and search out any miscalculation. This enforced leisure may be a blessing in disguise.

1 P.M., Sunday, October 17, 1959.

Impossible to sleep. Another attack earlier, bad this time. The nitro tablets worked, remarkably quickly, but for how long? I need time so desperately now, every minute counts. Fate cannot be so capricious as to rob me of this chance, not now, when I am so close. I *will* myself to live, as I will myself to succeed .... Later, back to the records. I've gone over everything and find no margin for error. But the whole thing still seems so damnably unreal. Only three months! I find it almost impossible to look back to a time when the project was not a part of me. Each day of work has been a tiny encapsulated universe. Zirin could be right — perhaps the thing has unhinged me. Have I become the stereotype of a thousand Hollywood films, the Mad Scientist, helpless in the grip of an *idee fixe*? And yet my mind was never clearer. Every perception strikes into my brain with a cold knifelike thrust. Could that be the meaning of insanity — to see everything in total clarity? Then I am mad — and God help me if I ever become sane!

And, yet, the one impossible thing about the project remains the fact it has only taken three months — three months since I interviewed Miriam Ben Akai ....

I think it was the sweetness of her face that first held my interest. For the past year it had been increasingly difficult for me to identify with any of the patients. My theoretical research hadn't suffered — according to Zirin, it was never better — but it was a struggle to deal in human terms with any of the subjects. At first, after the initial wave of *aliya*, I found it easy to submerge myself in the human tide, to service the faceless survivors like so many units on an assembly line. There was a relief in immersing myself in their problems, in trying to reach the most seriously disassociated. And yet, I realize now, I grew more and more to resent my successes — there was something obscene about bringing my zombies back to life. It reminded me of my own bitterness, the acid guilt of survival. The only ones that mattered I could never reach.

After the "normalization" in the midfifties I retreated more than ever into pure research. The healthy faces of this new generation, born away from barbed wire and the stench of Cyklon-B, were a constant reproach to me. In the streets of Haifa or Tel Aviv I was almost physically ill. Everywhere around me surged this stagnant sea of bustling, empty faces, rushing to the market, shopping, flirting, engrossed in the multitudinous trivialities of a normal life. With what loathing must the drowned-eyed ghosts spat into Europe's skies from a thousand chimneys view this blasphemous affirmation! What was acclaimed a "miracle" was to me a betrayal. We had, all of us, broken our covenant with death.

For some reason I reacted differently to Miriam Ben Akai. There was something in her face that reminded me of Rachel, what Rachel might have been. *Rachel.* Is there any greater pain than memory? She had always loved me to toss her in the air and catch her, cradling her small body in my arms. When Kastner told us afterwards how it happened, I could picture her burbling with laughter, arms extended to clutch at the golden hair of the apple-cheeked soldier as she landed on the gleaming point of his bayonet. Miriam was seventeen years old and her Yemenite face was swarthy, but there was a glint of Rachel in her eyes. That was why I took her case away from Yonah and took a gamble on sleep therapy.

She was in schizoid withdrawal, almost catatonic, as were most of those we now processed. The easy ones had long since been sent forth

to some dreary *kibbutz* or white collar job, and those who remained were the hopeless cases, the last souvenirs of the camps. They were the only ones with whom I identified, the last links with my own past. I cherished those human vegetables, for they froze time and linked me to Ruth and Rachel and David. They had survived, but I forgave them, for they never had the indecency to really live.

Miriam was the first patient in years for whom I had any genuine enthusiasm about bringing back. At times I reviled myself for it. Was this not just another betrayal, a vulgar effort to fashion an ersatz Rachel from catatonic clay? Do not enough *golems* stalk my dreams? But I persevered.

Yonah and his team had tried everything from electric shock to chemotherapy without evoking even a flicker of awareness. She would just sit, small and brown, hunched over like a little timid rabbit, her hands clasped tight and her eyes empty. She could feed herself, at least, but that was about all.

I studied her case carefully. In one respect it was atypical, since her condition had nothing to do with the camps and Miriam had never set foot in Europe. According to Histradrut files, she arrived in 1950 in one of the early waves of *aliya* from Yemen. Miriam's father was dead, and she and her three younger sisters were cared for by their uncle, an illiterate cobbler, and his wife. In language, culture and customs — in everything but religion — they were Arabs. At the age of nine, still in a resettlement camp, Miriam was raped by her uncle. He'd been particularly brutal about it, and the case came to the attention of the authorities after the girl was admitted to a camp hospital with a broken arm and facial lacerations. She had been in schizoid withdrawal ever since, but the case was only forwarded to us when they closed down the last of the resettlement hospitals and farmed out the remaining patients to government institutions. By that time she was too far gone for conventional treatment.

Yonah fought bitterly with me when I first suggested my new therapy. He had no objection — timid obscurantist that he is — to deep sleep: that was "respectable." But using the computer to program a pattern of subliminal hypnotherapy was heresy — it did not bear the imprimatur of the blind performing seals squatting at the apex of his Freudian pyramid. I was using the girl as a "guinea pig," he told me. (As if he and his Viennese phallic-philes hadn't made the entire human race *their* collective guinea pig since 1910!)

Fortunately, the shreds of my reputation still hold some authority, and Zirin overruled Yonah's objections. Poor old Zirin! He's never forgiven himself for that.

Since Miriam was already in a pseudo-trance state it was necessary to hypnotize her through sleep. The hypno-therapy technique involved is relatively simple. Miriam was drugged into deep sleep and fed intravenously while an encephalograph charted her brain patterns and an electrocardiogram registered her heartbeat. Our computer was programmed with as much information about her early life as the hospital records gave me — as it was, not nearly enough — and on the basis of this data it dictated the most effective hypnotic instructions, which I then transcribed on tape. Miriam's entire bed — pillow, mattress, everything — was wired for sound, murmuring at an almost inaudible level. Day after day, night after night, the tape decks urged her to travel back, back to the moment of the trauma with her uncle. Her bed was one huge electronic voice, exerting a constant hypnotic command, whispering her down the corridors of time, gently guiding her subconscious back to the point of confrontation.

There are two kinds of age regression. In one, the subject merely recalls a past event from his memory. In the other, known as total regression or abreaction, he actually relives the experience and suffers through the emotional trauma once again. If a subject is induced back to childhood, he will speak with the voice of a five-year-old, and even his handwriting is that of a child. He is not remembering, he is *being* again.

As the tapes purred their insistent message, Miriam struggled — the encephalograph registered that as clearly as the eye notes convulsions — but slowly, inexorably, the subliminal instructions took hold, and the machine hypnotized its human subject.

It was on the third night that Zvi raced into my office with the news. The encephalograph had gone suddenly dead at 3:35 A.M. — just as the brain pulses reached a crescendo. I raced into her room. The fool should have called me as soon as the count increased, since there was good reason to believe a mounting wave pattern indicates surrender to the therapy suggestion. Miriam had finally relived the moment of rape and, hopefully, faced her trauma. Anxiously, I registered her pulse, and for a moment I froze. It was gone. I checked the heartbeat, and the silence blasted me with ice. She had slipped away. Had the shock of confrontation stopped her heart?

As if in answer, a hot stabbing

pain shot through my arm and shoulder, and my chest pulsed with the familiar icy ache. I fumbled in my pocket for the nitro, somehow managed to get two tablets into my mouth, and then a black screen shimmered across my eyes. Dimly, as I fell into nothingness, I could see Rachel's face, shadowy and distorted, mirrored in Miriam's death mask.

When I returned to consciousness, Zvi was supporting me, his eyes anxious, torn between his duties to the patient and his fears for me.

"Doctor, I'll call Yaacov, you must rest ...."

I pushed him aside roughly.

"See to the girl." The words were faint, and I braced myself against an examination table. The pain was receding, replaced by a cold tingling glow, a frozen peace. Zvi regarded me uncertainly, then returned to Miriam's side. After a moment he turned to me.

"Doctor, I think ...." The words were strangled. "She's come *back* ...."

I just stood there numbly incapable of action or even coherent thought, until Zvi led me gently towards the encephalograph. Slowly, spasmodically, the pulses were beginning to register again. There was a strange, long elliptical stasis between each beat, but the brain was functioning. I returned to the bed and checked her pulse and heartbeat again. They were slow, laborious, but they were there! I almost sobbed with relief, then pulled myself together, and seized by a sudden wild surge of hope, ordered Zvi to immediately disconnect the hypno-therapy tapes. As he did so, I watched Miriam anxiously. I had never even prayed for such an instantaneous change! Color was flowing into her cheeks, and the blank, catatonic mold of her face was crumbling into folds of expression. I gave her fifty milligrams of bemegride intravenously to break the sleep trance and awaited the results tensely. Slowly, her eyelids spasmed open and her eyes looked into time. No longer empty, dead, but large, frightened — and alive! She tried to speak but her voice crackled dryly. I stroked her forehead and spoke some soothing gibberish. At that point, of course, I should have given her a sedative and returned her to sleep. But I could not. I stood there unable to move, watching this wonderful, mobile face swim into being, like a rose blooming out of the pitted face of a rock. My own momentary mortality was forgotten. I had succeeded!

For the first time Miriam spoke to me. Her voice was harsh, labored, rusty from disuse. I could not understand the Arabic words.

Zvi motioned impatiently, and I snapped out of my spell and put her out with a shot of sodium amytal. I left the room like a man in a trance and walked on jerky legs to my office where I collapsed, drained, behind my desk.

Lovingly, I held Miriam's file in my hands. I could not know until the next day the full dimensions of my success, but the girl was no longer withdrawn, catatonic. That much had been accomplished. Long months of work lay ahead to condition Miriam to face a world she had left for eight years, but the main battle was won. In the same moment, we had both nearly died, and now the victory had resurrected me as well as Miriam. I reached for my pen and then stopped, looking at the white pages before me.

I still don't know what it was that first caught my eye, but later I realized it must have been the length of the first page. Before, I was sure, there had been three sparse paragraphs of biographical material (how often I had lamented their brevity as I programmed the computer), but now, inexplicably, there was a fourth. I read it over slowly, the import not registering at first. The paragraph said simply that Miriam's uncle had been found dead, his throat cut, immediately after the rape incident. An apparent suicide, the report concluded. The words tore into my mind like arrows, and I groped for the appended probation report on the man. This was some kind of weird mistake. I had investigated the uncle's case carefully; he was sentenced to two years imprisonment for his crime and after his release in 1953 had worked as a construction hand at Eilat. I had been unable to trace him beyond that point. What possible meaning could this reference to his death have? And why had my eyes never detected it before tonight?

I calmed myself. This was ridiculous, merely some bureaucratic error I had overlooked in my previous examinations of the file. I looked for the probation report, and the results of the inquiries by the Eilat police. They were not there. I extracted every page of the file and examined it singly, but the probation report was nowhere in evidence. And yet I had reread it just the night before and carefully returned it to the folder. Unwillingly, my eyes drifted to the fourth paragraph on the first page. "Dead ... throat cut ... apparent suicide ...." This was impossible! My triumph was draining away, perhaps my sanity as well. What was happening to me? I knew this file like my own right hand; someone must have altered it since the night before. But who? And why? For no reason, my mind raced

back to Miriam's room and the blank encephalograph. I didn't know it then, but a part of my brain had already glimpsed the truth.

The next morning, after a feverish night punctuated by two minor but intense bouts of anginal pain, I reread Miriam's records and ransacked my files for a copy of the missing probation report on her uncle. It had vanished without a trace. Desperately, I placed a call to Ari Bauer, the probation officer in Jaffa who had handled the case. We'd spoken at length previously, and Bauer remembered the man clearly. Incidents of incestuous rape are rare among Jews, and he had tried without success to discover the uncle's psychological motivations. "The fellow may be a Jew by religion," he had complained, echoing the Ashkenazi ambivalence towards their Sephardic brothers, "but he's as much a part of our culture as a Bedouin camel driver. I got nowhere with him." That was just a fortnight ago. Now, his voice was blank, the tone that of a stranger.

"Doctor Hirsch, you must have the wrong Bauer. You say you discussed this case with me two weeks ago? I've heard of you by reputation of course, Doctor, but I've never spoken to you before. And I've never handled such a case as you describe. But perhaps another of our probation workers ...."

I hung up and with trembling fingers dialed the Eilat police officer who had traced the uncle's movements after he left prison. We had been on the phone for almost an hour a little more than a week before, but today he could remember neither me nor Miriam's uncle. Unless — was I by any chance *the* Dr. Karl Hirsch? Why, he had heard so much about me from his eldest son, who had attended my lectures at the university some years before. It was a great honor, how could he help me? I hung up. The same obsequies had bubbled from his lips when I had first called about the case, a call that, in his mind at least, had never taken place. Slowly, like ice melting, my numbness began giving way to excitement.

When I got to Miriam's room, Zvi and the Arabic translator I had requested were already standing by her bed. I looked down wonderingly at the childlike face, serene in sleep, and held back my thoughts with an effort. I was a scientist, not a witch doctor.

Zvi spoke softly and Miriam stirred and opened her eyes. There was bewilderment in them, but no fear. I leaned over the bed and touched her forehead lightly. She did not shrink from me.

"Miriam," I said in Hebrew, "you have been ill, but you are well

now. We are your friends, here to help you."

The interpreter translated swiftly into liquid Arabic, and Miriam smiled uncertainly, first at him and then at me.

At that point I should have run through a whole series of questions designed to put her at ease and determine how adequately she was adjusting to reality. In a normal case it would have been days, perhaps weeks, before I even approached the question of her original trauma, depending upon the stability she evidenced in our talks. But I could not wait — the question was gnawing at my brain like an angry ferret. "Miriam," I asked her tautly, "do you remember your uncle Avraham, and what happened in Lidda?" As the interpreter translated the question, Zvi's eyes swung quizzically in my direction.

The girl was silent for a moment. Zvi was almost audibly holding his breath. And then, incredibly, she smiled and spoke in soft, fluid Arabic.

"My uncle was a bad man," the interpreter translated. "He was very bad to me and my sisters. I think he made me sick for a while." The smile grew wider, revealing small, bad teeth. "But now he will never hurt us again. I punished him for his wickedness."

The voice was high, that of a child. Her mind was still, of course, arrested at the age of nine.

"How did you ... punish him?" I asked. My voice sounded strange even to me.

"I made him dead," she said. As the interpreter spoke the words, he looked at me strangely. Miriam paused and then spoke in a little voice. "May I have some sherbet?"

Zvi moved quickly to my side and grabbed my arm.

"For Heaven's sake, Doctor," he whispered harshly, "stop this now. You'll undo everything you've accomplished."

I looked at him blankly and then spoke, with an effort.

"Get her some sherbet. I'll be in my office." I turned, and almost ran from the room.

I sat at my desk for more than an hour, running the thing over in my mind. Zvi came in once, remonstrating with me for introducing the trauma so rapidly.

"You've brought her out of withdrawal, Doctor, but she's still ill. Now she has the delusion that she killed her uncle. Why didn't you wait?"

I knew it was not easy for Zvi to challenge me so openly, and I was not annoyed with him.

"She has no delusion," I told him quietly. "She is well. Still mentally a child, but well."

He started to argue with me,

but I ordered him from the office.

I no longer questioned the incredible theory that had first sprung into my mind the night before. I have never been a conventional man, constrained by the shackles of the "plausible." What is irrational today is often the germ of tomorrow's truth; all great scientific discoveries have necessitated a leap into the impossible. I had no proof, but I knew surely, instinctually, what had happened.

Students of hypnosis have long speculated on how far back the mind could be drawn in trance. Some sensational studies, such as the "Bridie Murphy" case in the States, even claimed that the regression could lead into past incarnations. Such theories were, and are, just mystical gibberish to me. But there was no doubt the mind could travel down the corridors of time, particularly in sleep, when the subconscious is most liberated and incidents buried years in the past, forgotten or rejected by the conscious mind, can be relived. In Miriam's case I had instituted a radically new kind of hypno-therapy: day after day I had urged her to recreate an incident blocked off from her consciousness. I had no idea of the strength of the hypnotic impulse the tape decks transmitted to her as she slept in trance. Her mind had traveled back — but not just in memory! At the moment the encephalograph went dead (I could admit no other explanation) Miriam had somehow sent her mental force *physically* back through time, back to the moment her uncle raped her. And the revenge that had simmered in her subconscious for eight years of schizoid withdrawal had exacted its price. Somehow, Miriam had broken the bonds of time and space — and killed a man.

All my scientific training forced me to reject the thought, but some inner fiber of my being resisted and thrust it inexorably forward. I knew — against logic, against all reason — that I had discovered the secret to time travel. Not, to be sure, by the corporal body — that would probably be forever impossible — but by the mind. And that mental force, stretching back through time, was more than a disembodied entity; it had the power to affect its environment. Miriam's mind had *killed*. And when the act was accomplished, time itself had changed.

The logical objections to my theory were, of course, legion. The hoary paradox of the man traveling back in time to kill his own grandfather had relevance here — how could man change the past without the consequences of that change affecting his own present? The fact must be that he could. Time must have elastic quality, absorbing the

changes, the ruptures in its fabric, and incorporating them into a new framework of reality. Like a rubber band, time can be stretched, but will always snap back into shape. Thus Miriam's uncle, who in "Prime" Time had raped her, been sentenced to prison, and gone on to work as a laborer, had in "Secondary" Time been murdered immediately after the rape. He had ceased to be. And all the records of his subsequent existence in initial time had been snuffed out with him. Thus the probation report had disappeared; Bauer and the police officer didn't remember the uncle's case or talking about it with me, and a new paragraph reporting his death had flashed into existence on Miriam's records. But why, then, was the memory still so clearly enshrined in my own brain? Had my very closeness to the case — yes, let's face it, my obsession — managed to preserve my recollections, somehow resisted the cosmic eraser scrubbing away the past? Or had my momentary blackout, that brief slice of death as my diseased heart choked off the supply of oxygen to the brain, spared me the editing process, perpetuating my original memories of the case as they were snuffed out in everyone else? Could it even be, for some inscrutable reason, that I, as the author of the change, had been deliberately spared its consequences as part of some larger purpose? No, that way lies megalomania. But whatever accounted for it, one thing now was certain to me: the fabric of time itself had been altered, the future had been changed. And — the thought clawed at my brain — if it could be done once, it could be done again.

Tel Aviv, Monday, October 18, 1959.

Rereading last night's notes in the clear light of morning, my first impulse is to burn them. If the experiment fails, and they are found, I will be branded a lunatic, or worse. But on reflection I decided to preserve them as a kind of shorthand record of the project. While I can recognize the prospect of failure intellectually, I have an emotional, almost mystical, assurance of its success. Why, I do not know, but it is of the same unassailable intensity as the initial flash of perception I experienced the night of Miriam's "recovery." The project *will* succeed. And if that conviction is just one more delusion of my crumbling mind, well, I shall at least have willed to posterity an interesting clinical case history.

My only worry is that this record might become a guidebook for future efforts along similar lines. I have none of the innovator's passion to proselytize. I know how

dangerous misuse, any use, of my process can be. But I am determined to go ahead. If I succeed, these notes will in any case blink out of existence with me and my world. They will belong to Prime Time — dusty tombstones marking what-might-have-been. And I will be — where? Sitting somewhere in Germany with my grandchildren playing at my feet, David and Rachel's children, and Ruth in the kitchen simmering a schnitzel on the stove? Or, just as likely, dead years before, felled by disease or accident. It makes little difference. I have been dead for years, it is only the *manner* of death that matters. And whatever happens to Ruth or Rachel or David, they shall never have seen Auschwitz.

Today I finished programming the computer, and then another session with Lashovitz.

9 P.M., Monday Evening, October 18, 1959.

The last batch of books has been processed. The most useful was *The Young Hitler I Knew* by August Kubizek, a boyhood friend in Linz and Vienna. I pray his memory is on a higher level than most memoir writers.

It went well with Lashovitz. He says I am a "natural subject." I hope so. Unfortunately, he has had little experience with sleep-trance hypnosis and seems to consider it on a level with that popular nonsense a few years back about learning languages from a tape recorder on a nightstand. But he has been most useful. My main problem remains one of time. I will only have two days, and the hypnosis must be effective. I can now auto-suggest myself into trance with relative alacrity, but the crucial point remains the sustained suggestion from the tapes. Here the computer must not lead me astray. God knows I fed it all available material on both of us, but no machine is infallible. And there can be no room for error. I have only one chance.

Tel Aviv, Tuesday, October 19, 1959.

Of all people, Lochner showed up today. I can't make out the man. He says he's here on Technion business, but I suspect I am the sole object of his visit. He showed himself into my office this morning, all friendship and apologies. His manner is infuriating. I have lived long enough to distinguish deference from condescension, but I make an effort to be polite. He is, in a sense, an ally against Zirin.

"Doctor," he opens up in that flat nasal voice of his, "I think you know my respect for you. At the university, *Foundations Of Social*

Therapy was a kind of bible to me ...."

"The book was outdated when it was published in 1938," I interrupt, but he just smiles sadly. God, how sick I am of all of them!

"Doctor," he goes on, "I think I can speak for other members of the board when I tell you how much I regret this controversy over your current project. If you could only explain your objectives to us in more detail, I'm sure the opposition would melt away."

I try to keep my voice level. "I explained my objectives to Dr. Zirin last month." And that, I add silently, was my first mistake.

"That explanation," Lochner goes on, "seems to have begun the whole misunderstanding. Dr. Zirin is a bit vague in his objections, but he seems to feel you're using university funds for something .... well, something beyond the realm of science, something closer to spiritualism. He may be overstating the case, but ...."

"I told Zirin nothing to invite such a conclusion," I cut in, though of course I told the idiot far more than his pygmy brain could ever comprehend. "I merely discussed in general terms certain theories about the memory-inducing potential of hypnosis. My present work is purely theoretical, in any case."

Lochner looks uncomfortable. "Dr. Hirsch, Lev Zirin is not an enemy of yours. He's always supported your work, even when other members of the board preferred funding studies with more pragmatic goals. But his report on your new project ...."

I could hold myself back no longer. "His report is a lie!"

My voice breaks on the words, but I cannot stop.

"And Zirin is a fool, a parochial fraud! Mental eunuchs like him will never comprehend the new ... the original ...."

I falter. I am shaking, more furious with myself than Lochner. Sweat streams down the back of my neck. What is happening to my self-control?

Lochner just looks at me sadly, the smug little nonentity. He gets up to leave and puts one hand on my shoulder.

"Doctor, try to remember how much we all admire you and your work. But you're obviously under a strain. Perhaps you've been taxing yourself too harshly on this new project. If you had a chance to rest, to review your findings ...."

I shake his hand from me. This is going all wrong, but I seem to have lost my grip on the conversation.

"I don't need a 'rest,' Lochner," I whisper, my voice the rustle of dry leaves. "And neither you nor Zirin nor the whole pack of *castrati*

on your damned Projects Board is going to put me out to pasture. I'll finish my work with or without your support."

I fall back into my chair, limp, exhausted. My hands are trembling and I clasp them tight in my lap. Lochner just looks at me again with that supercilious, pitying expression of his and slowly walks away. He stops for a moment in the doorway.

"Doctor," he says in a soft voice, "no people on earth is more obsessed with history than us Jews. There are times when that obsession can become unhealthy. I think you understand me."

He leaves before I can answer him.

This incident with Lochner ruins the whole day for me. There is only one explanation for his visit: Zirin has won over some more of the board, and they are reconsidering the project. Even my two weeks respite is now in jeopardy. Lochner must have come to get my side of the case and I, like an adolescent, jump hysterically at him. My nerves are strung taut as wire. I do need a rest. But there is no time. Now, more than ever, there is no time.

Tel Aviv, Wednesday, October 20, 1959.

I'm speeding up the project. Yesterday's contretemps with Lochner is a storm signal I cannot disregard. I am dictating the tapes now on the computer's recommendations, without reprogramming it for verification. This lengthens the odds against me, but I have no choice. It must be this weekend.

Tel Aviv, Thursday morning, October 21, 1959.

The tape decks are complete. I will install them tomorrow morning. There will be no trouble about the weekend. Rappaport goes to Haifa for one of his interminable conferences, and the rest of them will be at the beach, or wife-swapping, or otherwise celebrating this Promised Land of ours. The institute will be empty.

Strangely, I feel no sense of exhilaration — or apprehension, for that matter. There are a thousand reasons for failure, God knows: my own insufficient study of the methodology, the weaknesses inherent in auto-suggestion, the danger of discovery halfway through by some officious custodian. Above all, the simple fact that I am predicating everything on a technique vitally different from that which succeeded with Miriam: she was instructed to *remember* a specific incident, a trauma in her own past life, while I am focusing on an historic period with no subjective, psychological relevancy. Only in one sense are we alike: both

of us, if I am successful, will have followed an Ariadne thread of hate through the maze of time. Miriam back to the summer of 1950 ... and I to the winter of 1913.

I realize that even if my theory of what happened to Miriam is correct (and there is no objective proof of it other than my fading memories of her uncle's file), the odds are still fantastically high against recreating her experience. And, yet, I have this unshakable assurance of success. It is almost a *deja vu* feeling, as if in some other life I have gone through all this once before and succeeded. Perhaps I have. Perhaps that is why I can feel no thrill of excitement at the prospect. It is all still an obsession with me, but a strangely passionless one.

Tel Aviv, Thursday evening, October 21, 1959.

Earlier tonight I had dinner at Lueder's, on Dizengoff Street. I took a table on the terrace. It is the first time in months I have "dined," as opposed to my customary wolfing down of tasteless sandwiches in the lab, and I view it, childishly perhaps, as a farewell gift to myself. A sort of *bon voyage* to my world, and my life.

As I am finishing my meal, Zvi comes in with some of his friends. He looks surprised to see me, but is effusive, introductions all around, tries to get me to join his table. I decline but am not annoyed. I watch them go off, Zvi with his girl, a *sabra* like himself, young, tanned, hair like honey. How proud, how assured, how natural they all are — and physically, how much like the old "Strength Through Joy" posters of the proud, blond young Aryan and his Valkyrie mate. Valhalla in Palestine; that would have posed a problem for Streicher.

Suddenly, I feel sad. For the first time since the project began I experience something like regret. I look across the terrace at Zvi and his friends laughing under the lantern-laced trees, and I wonder if they know that they have just met their murderer. It is my duty to liquidate their world — to snuff it out like a candle. If I succeed, how many of them will see life — and where? What women will never meet their intended husbands; what children will never be born? Will I not be committing a genocide as real as Hitler's, and even more final? But I owe no debt to them, any of them. There is only Rachel, and David, and Ruth. To wipe the reality of Auschwitz from the blank slates of their futures is worth a thousand Zvis, and his country, his poor Israel, destined to die stillborn in the placid hearts of a generation that never looked through barbed wire, never heard the tramp of jackboots. And my

personality will dissolve along with theirs — whatever path I follow after 1913, what is *me* today shall never exist. And yet, if I could only *see* Rachel and David in my mind. I remember their voices, even their touch, but their faces dissolve into mist whenever I attempt to capture them. They are all I have left of reality, and yet they are the substance of shadows. Am I extinguishing a world to remember the faces of my children?

Tel Aviv, Friday, October 22, 1959.

The hypnopaedia is installed and functions properly. I have dispensed with the encephalograph and electrocardiagram; this experiment will not be entered in any record book. Intravenous feeding is impossible, of course, but I only have two days to succeed or fail, in any case. Nutrition is the last of my worries.

I have installed a photic stimulator to assist me into trance. This is a photoelectric instrument synchronized to the natural frequencies of the brain. Once tuned in to the subject's individual frequency, it vastly diminishes resistance to auto-hypnosis by shortening induction time and deepening the hypnotic level. I pray it does not fail me.

I am leaving these notes on my desk. Their recovery will mean my failure — if they still exist, so shall the world I wish to destroy. I cannot conceive of partial success; if my mind does slip the bonds of time, I know I will accomplish my mission. I still do not know *how* Miriam killed her uncle and disrupted the temporal balance, but kill she did. The intensity of my hate is at least as deep as hers, and the power of my mind infinitely greater. I shall not go back as a tourist.

I will return after closing tonight and lock off the laboratory. Barring accidents, I have until Monday morning. It took longer in Miriam's case, but I have improved the techniques and am spared the added problem of breaking through schizoid withdrawal. Once I have auto-suggested myself into trance and the tape decks go to work, the process should move swiftly — to success, or failure.

I was wise in acting now. This morning there was a long memo on my desk from Kravitz in the bursar's office. They've discovered that I tapped the contingency fund and have requisitioned my receipts from disbursements. The tone it polite, but Kravitz must be going crazy wondering why I have ordered thirty-seven biographies of Adolf Hitler! Luckily, he has not yet contacted Zirin and the board. But he will soon. Thank God I didn't wait another week.

Rereading these books, I realize

that I have never explicitly discussed the objective of the project. It is quite simple. I — whatever part of me escapes the crucible of the present — intend to travel back to the Vienna of January, 1913. There, I shall kill a boy of twenty-four named Adolf Hitler.

Tel Aviv, Friday evening, 8:30 P.M., October 22, 1959.

I am writing this hurriedly, as a postscript. There are just a few minutes remaining to me. I think everyone has left the building, but I will wait a little longer to be sure.

To whom do I address these notes, I wonder? The people who will find me on Monday morning, rigid in trance, strapped to a talking bed? The men who will shake their heads and murmur their regrets as they carry me off to some mental institution, or push me into a "kind" pensioned retirement? For that is, of course, what will happen if I fail. But, again, perhaps with the ersatz euphoria of megalomania, I am convinced things will be otherwise. I am addressing this memo to the vast swirling limbo that will engulf this present "reality" if — *when* — I succeed. What exactly will happen at the moment I kill Hitler in 1913, I do not know. Will future time, the time in which he lived to found the Third Reich and stamp his imprint on a screaming world, just cease to be? Or will it unravel slowly, the threads of possibility leading from the spindle of Hitler's personality dissolving one by one? Or — and I do not care for this thought — will two parallel worlds branch off from the moment that temporal continuity is disrupted, one in which Hitler died at the age of twenty-four and the other in which he lived on until 1945, writing his name in blood across the map of Europe. That I do not want. There must be no world, ever, where Ruth and Rachel and David look at me with begging eyes, where they are dragged from me to the truck, where I watch frozen as the rifle butts thud into their bodies, where I do nothing, where I do not die, where I live ....

It is true, of course. If I had died, this world, this reality about me could live on. I do not really hate even Hitler; it is hatred for myself that moves me. What greater horror is there than survival? The lucky ones all died. They were sucked into the earth of Europe, spewed into its darkening skies. The great voracious machine that was the Third Reich devoured their thousand component parts; the bones and juices were melted down like a turkey after Christmas dinner, the hair sheared off to stuff the *herrenvolk's* mattresses, the gold plucked from the teeth. A

million flowers bloom from their flesh across Czechoslovakia, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Poland .... And a few of us left, rejects from the charnel house, Kasper Hausers thrust into a world grown alien, wandering across the face of the moon with dead eyes, echoing hearts. Nothing left but the impotence of hate, the iron despair of existence. And I alone, at last, can do something, can change it all ... can bring them back, resurrect them, watch the lips of six million graves open to kiss the sky, fashion another world, another life for them. The power of God in the hands of a ghost. I am empty, and I cannot even remember Rachel's face.

Everyone has left, and I am going into the laboratory.

24, Curzon Street
London, W. 1
November 18, 1959

Dr. Jaacov Rappaport
Maimonides Hospital
57 Herzl Street
Tel Aviv, Republic of Israel

Dear Dr. Rappaport:

I am enclosing the attached document for your *private* consideration. As you know, for some time Stacchmann and myself have been working on an official history of the *Institut fur Neuro-pathologie*. In a recent examination of some of Freud's unpublished notes, mainly fragments and memos to Lossman, I came upon the following piece of paper, apparently an extract from a journal or working notebook. Several things about it lead me to ask your advice. For one thing, it is signed by Dr. Karl Hirsch, apparently the same Hirsch responsible for *The Foundations of Social Therapy*. I know of his postwar work with you, and I was grieved to learn of his recent death. Furthermore, the note puports to be written in 1913, and indeed the quality of the paper and the state of the ink indicate it is not of recent origin. However, the message refers to *Adolf Hitler*. It is addressed to Freud, but there is a notation on it that appears to be in the handwriting of Jung. I can only assume the whole thing is some kind of elaborate fraud, perhaps initiated by a graduate student here who read of Dr. Hirsch's death. But it somehow disturbs me. The papers among which this extract was found have been under lock and key in the university archives; and, what is more, I have been studying them intensively for several weeks and am conversant with every item in the file. The enclosed seems to have sprung out of thin air. This is obviously some kind of hoax, but I find the whole affair perplexing. Can you shed any light on it?

In any case, I look forward to seeing you at the Brussels

Conference.

Fraternally,
Gabriel Berman

November 24, 1959

Dr. Lev Zirin
Hebrew University
Jerusalem

Lev:

What on earth do you make of the enclosed? And how old was Hirsch in 1913? I will be in Jerusalem next week, and I wish you would fill me in on your initial doubts about Hirsch and his last project. Didn't he die after experimenting on himself? And if the old man did go crackers at the end, did his mania encompass long-distance forgery? Keep this to yourself in any event.

Yours,
Yaacov

Enclosure (for your eyes only):

Vienna, January 26, 1913. Not a date, but an epitaph. May God forgive me.

It worked, beautifully, smoothly, inexorably, as I knew it would, as it had to. It worked, because time could not be changed.

How long I can keep on writing this, I do not know. If I finish, I will send it to the one man who deserves it, Sigmund Freud. My teacher. In this world he is a man of fifty-seven, just blossoming into fame. Yes, let him have this, and if he doesn't throw it away, perhaps years later it will strike a chord. A peculiar form of revenge, I suppose. Fitting.

These lines are not written by my hand. The fingers that hold the pen are long, sensitive. An artist's hand, graceful. The hand of Adolf Hitler.

It should have been obvious. In my obsession, I never gave serious thought to the most vital element of the entire equation: *how* had Miriam killed her uncle? Granted the ability of the mind to transcend time, it must remain a disembodied entity in that other-when, an observer, not an actor. Then how to manipulate material objects, move the razor to the throat, the gun to the temple? So obvious, and I never thought of it. Miriam's mind traveled back and entered the *mind* of her uncle. The force of her hate wedded her consciousness to his and gave her possession. Possession. Perhaps this accounts for the countless tales throughout history of demons that seize the mind, of satanic forces wrestling for the souls of men. Perhaps others have traveled back, without my alchemist's kit of science, entering the brains of their victims, possessing them. As I have. As I almost have. Miriam's uncle was not murdered, at least not in the technical sense of the word. He committed suicide.

I do not know how long I stayed

in trance before the moment of contact was made. I awoke to a sudden blinding flash of awareness, a brilliant throb of life. I could feel the tendrils of my consciousness expanding, forcing themselves through a fog of blurred thoughts, ink-blotting out across my host mind. And suddenly I was looking out through the windows of his eyes. The world of 1913 was before me, and the remnants of Adolf Hitler's consciousness were locked, cowering, in the inner recesses of his brain. I knew at once what had happened, for Hitler's thoughts were now part of mine, weakened, beaten down, but there. No army had conquered as thoroughly as mine. I had occupied the enemy camp, the very mind of the foe.

I have never experienced such pure exhilaration. I played with his body like a child's toy. I ordered his fingers to move, and they did. I commanded his vocal chords, and he screamed, yowling shrilly until I turned it into a burbling, hysterical laugh. I forced Hitler's body onto the floor of his filthy, unheated flat, and he crawled on all fours across the room, his nose snuffling at the dust like a pig after truffles. Look at your Fuhrer now! I made his hands claw out tufts of his hair, tear at his private parts, but I felt the pain too, and I threw him onto the bed panting, exhausted, tears of joyous laughter and pain streaming out of his — our — eyes. I felt an ecstasy that transcended even the sexual. Rachel's murderer was mine, my own plaything, to do with as I wished. I was God, and the devil was my rag doll.

As the novelty wore off, I tired of my sport. I could have killed him then and there — had him kill himself, that is — in any of a hundred ways. I could throw him out of the window into the icy, gas-lit streets below. I could place his hands on the rusty pen knife on the shabby dresser and watch him disembowel himself. I could knot one of his greasy ties around his neck and hang him on a coat hook in the closet, enjoying the last scarecrow tango of his feet in the air. But then it would all be over. I would have won, but I could not savor my victory.

Instead, I pushed his feet to the door and propelled him, coatless, down the stairs and out into the cold night air. At first I moved his body with a certain difficulty, and he walked in jerky, automaton strides. But soon the synapses of his nervous system locked flawlessly into my control, and I took him forward smoothly, occasionally making him skip along the Rotenturmstrasse like a demented child. Once, passing a group of bloated burghers in fur-trimmed greatcoats and top hats on the Jasomirgottstrasse, I propelled him

onto his face in the gutter and made him drink the filthy rivulets of water in great, slobbering gulps before their astounded eyes. But, by and large, I just walked him, a helpless dog chained to an unbreakable inner leash.

My triumph was so sweet that I paid little attention to this Vienna of my youth. Beyond the clothes of the passerby and the handful of antique motor cars on the streets it was little changed from the metropolitan centers I had left behind fifty years in the future. The sky was dark and lowering, and a cold wind blew in from the canal. That was what decided me to drown him.

As we — only the plural pronoun describes it — walked towards the canal, I could sense the mind I had dispossessed stirring restlessly under my control. Deep in the inner recesses of the brain the essence of Adolf Hitler was peering timidly out at the stranger ruthlessly usurping its territory. Once, it even made a feeble attempt to reassert control, striving desperataely to direct the movement of his legs. Amused, I let Hitler have his leeway. After he had turned and taken a few halting steps back towards his lodgings, I slapped him down quickly, wrenching his body around towards the canal and as a punishment scrabbling his grubby fingernails into one cheek until ribbons of blood welled sluggishly out of his face. The tattered shreds of his mind retreated numbly into the backwaters of consciousness, cowering like a wounded rabbit in the deepest nook of its burrow. I — he — smiled and urged him on.

As we reached the banks of the canal, a light, chill rain, more like a mist, began to fall. This, then, was the moment. The moment I would both avenge and spare Rachel, and Ruth, and David, and millions of others. This was the moment when time would be changed, when a new branch of reality would fork out of the road of history. It might not be a perfect world — the first war, and Versailles, would not be changed, and German irredentism would probably precipitate a second European conflict — but it would be a world without Adolf Hitler, without the swastika, without Auschwitz. I moved his feet to the edge of the embankment and peered down at the swirling water.

At the last moment Hitler made one final, desperate attempt to save himself. Like a coiled snake his consciousness sprang out and struck at me. The strength of this counterattack surprised me, but it was still no match for my control. I toppled his body forward and into the roiling black waters.

I still do not know exactly what

happened at the moment the icy waters of the canal closed around Hitler's body. Most probably, both our minds blinked out momentarily, and sheer animal instinct for survival took over. But when I came to, his — our — body was stretched out limply on the far bank of the canal. There was a taste of sour vomit in my mouth, and Hitler was shivering uncontrollably. My mind reached out to seize control — and was suddenly smashed back against an iron wall of mental force. Adolf Hitler had reasserted mastery of his mind, and now I was *his* prisoner.

The trip back to his shabby lodgings was a nightmare. Shaking, retching, he stumbled through the darkened streets of Vienna. Once, after a particularly vicious bout of shivering, I almost regained control and desperately shoved his body onto the tracks before a rickety streetcar. But he pulled back in time, and the ice-cold force of his will shot out at me, this time mingled with an implacable hate. I have tried since then to regain control, but I grow weaker and weaker. Once, while he was racked with fever the following day, I almost succeeded in driving a pair of scissors into his throat, but he caught me just in time. I am being driven further and further back into his mind. Brick by brick, he is building an invisible mental wall against me, and I now despair of ever fully breaking through again. If only I had shattered his mental control and routed his reason! But now it is too late. Too late.

It is only at moments like these, when he must sleep, that I have even a modicum of control, and that too is slipping away. It is possible for me to act independently of him in these moments, even to write as I am now, but not to take action against him. Before the thought is even fully formed, he senses it and drives me back.

I am writing this while I still can because of a horrible certainty that is dawning in my mind. If it is correct, my only hope is that I shall soon go mad.

I glimpsed the truth when the doctor came today, dispatched from some charity hospital here in the slums to treat Hitler for a mild case of pneumonia resulting from our plunge into the canal. The doctor was a Jew. As Hitler looked at him, his thoughts (he can, at least, hide nothing from me) began to form a hideous pattern.

Oh God, if only I had thought this through! The brain I occupied was not, like Miriam's uncle, that of an ignorant cobbler. It was strong, brilliant, twisted. *Or was it twisted?* That is what plagues me. I can read his memories as clearly as his thoughts, and they are not those of a demented, pathological anti-Semite. He had no politics, he

wanted only to be an artist, he nursed his feeble talent like a precious orchid. I see encounters with Jews here in the slums of Vienna where he was not hostile, even sympathetic. A Jew in some lodging house once gave him a warm coat during the bitter winter of 1912, and he thought at the time that Christians should only display similar charity. This cannot be Adolf Hitler!

But now, now after the mind-wrenching shock of my attempted possession, he struggles to maintain his sanity. He knows that something horrendous has happened to him, but he has no rational explanation for it. He fears for his reason. He can talk to no one about what has occurred; he is afraid he will be judged insane. All he knows for sure is that some evil force, some daemonic entity has tried to seize his brain, has degraded and humiliated him, and attempted to destroy him. He senses me in his mind; even as he fights me, the jumble of my memories and my thoughts reach him as his do mine. Like monstrous Siamese twins our minds are locked together, and he sees mine as a hideous growth deforming his reason, threatening his sanity and his very life.

And what is it that he senses of me, that he can learn of me? That I am a Jew. We cannot communicate in any accepted sense, we can only struggle desperately for control. And in that struggle he has learned that I — or *it*, because he views me not as a human personality but a pure force of evil — am somehow connected with the Jews. Dear God, I do not think he was insane when I first entered his mind. But he is now! Or at least partially demented, obsessed with the day-to-day struggle for the salvation of his sanity. He is winning, but he knows that I will always be there. My only escape would have been his — our — death. Now I am sealed within his brain, a malignancy he must ever guard against, block off, fight — a Jewish malignancy! I read in the biographies that after the war a Munich psychotherapist treated him for a paranoid fear of cancer, an obsession that persisted until his death. The historians attributed it to his mother's death from the disease. I, to my damnation, know better.

As he looks at the doctor today, at his swarthy Semitic features, I see the concept blooming in his mind: the Jews have done this. Not only to me and to my sanity, he thinks, it goes beyond that. They are the force of incarnate evil at large in the world. They must be fought! And, deeper, far deeper, an insistent whisper: and your mind will never be your own, you will never be free of this ghastly

intruder, unless the race that spawned it is obliterated from the face of the earth. Not until the cancer of the Jews is destroyed once and for all will this thing in your brain disappear, not until then will your very soul be returned to you. It is vague, inchoate, unformed, as yet even unspoken, but the idea exists. And I — I, Karl Hirsch — have planted it there. I have made Adolf Hitler. Dear God, I *am* Hitler.

My control is weakening. This may be my last chance, and I will try to get these lines mailed to Freud at his institute. For I know now that history cannot be changed. In my attempts to destroy Hitler I created him. I can see the years ahead now, see myself imprisoned in this tortured brain throughout the twenties and thirties, witnessing his meteoric rise to power even as the other Karl Hirsch grows to maturity, marries, is a father. Oh God, Rachel, Ruth, David, I am your murderer. And there will be no peace for me ever until he dies. Until the bullet crashes through his mouth in the chancellery bunker thirty-two years from now, I will lay shackled in his brain, the recorder and originator of his horrors. Oh dear God, let me at least go mad. Rachel.

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On John Clute: Cruel?

Clute's book reviews in the February issue are going to attract the usual volume of comment, some of it raging. Keeping in mind space limitations and stating in advance my general admiration for this critic's style if not always his opinions, I would like to make two comments which are not matters of opinion and in which I think Clute has gone somewhat out of line:

Alfred Bester's "They Don't Make Life Like They Used To" is a poignant and pathetic piece with a heartbreaking denouement. Clute's ability to find "restrained hilarity" in post-apocalyptic shock stunningly depicted says more about his state of mind than that of the story's characters.

Clute wonders why Dickson & Harrison wrote *Lifeboat* and how they got it into print. They wrote it as a memorial to the late John Campbell, who jointly plotted it with them in the last year of his life (the discussion was filmed and is now in a series of films about sf under the aegis of James Gunn). It was published in Campbell's magazine for explicable reasons, and for reasons equally explicable had little difficulty finding a publisher. (I happen to find at least the first half of that novel far better than does Clute but this is opinion, what is not opinion is Clute's snideness. It is cruel. Someone, somewhere pointed out that the only way to get a kind word out of Clute is to have published in *New Worlds*, and although his qualified rave for Bester shoots holes in this it doesn't shoot *many* holes.)

— Barry N. Malzberg

Incomprehensible?

I am not an entirely uneducated man (Ph.D. in clinical psychology), and regard myself as possessing at least minimally functional literacy. I am generally able to grasp the essentials of my professional and recreational reading without monumental effort. Why is it, then, that I am completely unable to extract a *shred* of sense or understanding from John Clute's book reviews? Do I possess a receptive aphasic blind spot of which I have been hitherto unaware? Or does Clute write in some obscure and esoteric literary idiom which only certain segments of the literati can understand? For me, trying to make sense of Clute's writing is like listening to the speech of a shrewd but floridly psychotic schizophrenic: it *almost* seems as if it should be logically understandable, but the meaning keeps slipping away at the crucial moment of comprehension. But nonetheless I cannot seem to shake the vaguely uneasy feeling that Clute must have something worthwhile to say (Else why would such an astute editor as yourself publish him consistently: Eh?), and that it is consequently my profound loss that I am unable to fully (or even partially) comprehend (what surely must be) the multi-leveled and subtly meaningful complexities of this man's literary judgments. Is he truly a critical hybrid of Lewis Carroll and James Joyce, or are his talents uniquely his own and without readily identifiable ancestry? In either case, I must insist that you immediately provide me with the key to unraveling this bejeweled and richly-hued tapestry of literary criticism. You do have it, don't you? *Don't you??*

— Carl Glover

John Clute replies:

I was glad to note that Barry Malzberg and I agree in admiring

Bester's fine novelette, and would suggest that his description of the story is less incompatible than he seems to think with my passing reference to its "contained hilarity" (which he misquotes as "restrained hilarity," another thing entirely); the story's hilarity and its contained poignance interact richly, I should have thought. Mr. Malzberg's sense that the denouement is "heartbreaking" is of course as much a matter of opinion as anything I said — though I certainly agree with him.

Although I'd be surprised if anyone really thought I'd claimed that authors Dickson and Harrison really used "six deadly threats" to get Lifeboat *launched, it's still nice to have Mr. Malzberg claim that literary merit was not involved in its publication. As I knew nothing of the filmed discussion that he mentions, I was therefore completely unaware of the memorial nature of the enterprise, or of the pious emotions it must have evoked in many breasts; in the absence of these guidelines I was left with the text itself — not a bad place for a review to start, I'd have thought — and my response to the text itself I've already recorded ... I thought (and think) that* Lifeboat *is a Stuffed Owl; my irritation with the thing is a direct consequence of my very strong admiration for both Harrison and Dickson, whose best work I read and reread with constant pleasure; high expectations breed a sharp blacklash when disappointed, and in my opinion should do so.*

As Mr. Malzberg merely quoted, without taking responsibility for, the anonymous canard about myself and New Worlds, *while at the same time demolishing the accusation himself, perhaps I should do no more than go along with him and point out the cruel and snide reference I make to Samuel R. Delany (who's appeared in NW) in the same review, and the respectful attention I give to Frank Herbert (who has not) later on. To go on would be seeming to protest too much, but take it from me I could bloody well go on and on and on.*

However ironically couched as a request for elucidation, Dr. Glover's oceanic distaste for my kind of book review is a little hard to deal with, as he attaches no bill of particulars, nor does his quaintly preLaingian description of schizophrenic language do much to make me feel I could *help the fellow. There is one point, though. Dr. Glover claims to have no general difficulty understanding his professional and recreational reading, with the clear implication that literary criticism is a subgenre of recreational reading. Now I would never make the mistake of assuming I could get much sense out of* his *professional reading (or writing) if I treated it as something to browse through* without changing pace; *perhaps he should try to reciprocate. Perhaps I have as strong a sense of the seriousness of the task and of the difficulty of truly understanding literature, even sf literature, as Dr. Glover (if he's typical of most soft scientists) has of the cognitive (and guild) rigours of clinical psychology. Perhaps Dr. Glover doesn't make the mistake so typical of his fellow academics, that of assuming that their professional fields of study have real content, and that difficulty of access only underlines the legitimacy of their work, while on the other hand art is merely recreation. Or perhaps he does, it's hard to tell. The alternate hypothesis — that what I write* is *incomprehensible — is still open, of course, but untested. He has presented no case.*

Hooray for Varley

I have been a rabid fan of fantasy and of science fiction since being a transplanted Martian in elementary school. In all these years I've read stories about people other than me, to which I had difficulty relating: Men. These genres where not just male-dominated. They were, to use a rolling-eye-sigh-creating word, sexist.

At last I've hopefully detected a trend. I couldn't believe a story I read a few weeks ago; I read it twice to make sure, then ran for the issue before that had another story by the same author: John Varley. The only words I can use to describe it are overused but, according to their original meanings, apt: refreshing, exciting, fantastic ... More, if I let myself wander on! I don't say this *only* for the successful and treat-it-as-normal integration of the sexes (and races), but also for the humanness of the characters, their validity and reality. And, for once, an author avoids the common assumption that intelligent scientist/explorers swear up a blue streak. I'm tired of the level of speech supposedly-educated characters use.

I hope to find more stories with the awareness projected by Varley's "In The Hall Of The Martian Kings," and "The Funhouse Effect." As long as I do, I will remain a loyal subscriber!

— Linda Foster

John Varley's "The Persistence of Vision" (20,000 words and his longest to date) will be coming up soon.

Gross Immorality

I must protest the depiction of gross immorality in the pages of *F&SF*. Fritz Leiber's "The Pale Brown Thing" (Jan. & Feb. 1977) was most offensive to me. In the story, Franz Westen *STEALS A LIBRARY BOOK*!!! If, perhaps, he came to a bad end, some hounding doom overtook him, I might not be so appalled, but he escapes relatively unharmed (except for a few scars on his soul) and unpunished for his vile deed. The stolen library book, a city directory which would be very difficult to replace, is destroyed. Shame on *F&SF* and shame on the author for publishing/writing such a thing. True, the world is not a nice place and much immorality abounds, but it appears so casually as to almost appear the author approves.

In protest, I may stop buying issues with the covers ripped off.

— J. B. Post
Map Librarian,
The Free Library of Philadelphia

Thanks for the criticism

Mr. Budry's December column was neither the best nor the worst I've seen in F&SF. It was merely the best review I've read in the last month and an order of magnitude better then anything I've seen in your competitors.

I enjoy reviews — particularly Robinson's reviews in *Galaxy* — but you, I think, have extended your readers a unique service in allowing such fine writers as Budrys, Russ, Malzberg, et al., to offer us *criticism.* An expression of gratitude is long overdue, so — finally — here it is.

Thank you.

— Robert Hamlin

Behind The Space Beyond

Algis Budrys's remarks about *The Space Beyond* in the March issue seem to show that he does not remember

what he reads. On page 28 he says that the stories predate Campbell's first marriage, to Dona Stuart; yet, as I note on the *first page* of my *Afterword*, Campbell himself tells us that *All* was a Don A. Stuart story. The manuscript cover page proclaims this. *The Space Beyond*, under the Campbell name was plainly meant for *Amazing*, and *Marooned* was meant for *Astounding*, under the Karl Van Kampen name. That Campbell wrote these in his mid to late twenties is clear enough, as close as we're going to know, and good enough.

Also on page 28, Budrys complains that there is not one word of explanation from those concerned how this book came into being. Wrong again, though not completely. On the bottom of page 284 of my *Afterword*, I clearly describe the state of the text as I found it, the fact that I did the line by line preparation of the text. At first Roger Elwood had the idea that someone should rewrite these completely, but I objected, holding that they should be as nearly Campbellian as possible. After reading the stories, I was sure that only minor work would be needed. Next I told Roger that Asimov should do the introduction and I would do the afterword. Again to Roger's credit, he bowed to those who know better. He handed me the phone and we got Isaac on the line. Roger's role as editor here was to bring together the manuscripts, Isaac, and myself. I did the afterword and worked on the text, and delivered the package to Elwood just as Isaac sent in his introduction (after reading my afterword). Roger assembled the book, using my suggestion for titling, read it, corrected the galleys, and generally saw the book through the Pyramid publishing schedule. He also arranged the terms with Campbell's estate (see Copyright page). On page 29 Budrys talks about the relationship of *All* to Heinlein's *Sixth Column*, using information from my afterword but forgetting where he got it. While it was known that there was a Campbell novellete on which Heinlein based *Sixth Column*, I identified the actual story. I also suggested to Isaac that he deal with Campbell's science in his introduction.

I think that this is all that needs to be said. In future I hope Budrys reads more carefully. One more thing: I also suggested that the three stories go as one big book and not 3 short books. Is this what you wanted to know, Mr. Budrys?

— George Zebrowski

Dear George:

Nowhere in the book is the necessary information, which had to be searched out of Roger Elwood by phone.

I never disputed that one of the three found story drafts carries the Stuart byline, but there's more to see in "All" than the obvious foreshadowing of Sixth Column. *It's by a less developed writer than the rather young Campbell who wrote "Twilight" and years later, in 1934, got it into print as the first Stuart story.*

What you can be sure of having dated, inexactly, is one typescript. You say on p. 284 that unlike "The Space Beyond" it was a "virtually finished text." Then I think we can be sure that earlier drafts existed. We can't be at all sure there was time for them all to post-date Campbell's wedding with Dona Stuart, who also, sadly, cannot tell us.

At any rate, an informal panel has decided that the manner of your letter may be justified by your strong proprietary feeling. The vote was about 6 to 5. I broke the tie.

— Mr. Budrys

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